UNESCO the Courier

PEOPLE AND PLACES
Colombia: a pirouette around poverty

PLANET
Venice: duels over troubled waters

ETHICS
Sport medicine: to heal or to win

CONNEXIONS
Cuddling up to cyborg babies

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Published in 27 languages

September 2000

The other face of globalization

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© Michel Granger, Paris

The other face of globalization

They come from the hills of the Philippines, the offices of Silicon Valley, the Andean cordillera and the fishing villages of India. But despite their different agendas, these groups have found common ground and given birth to a worldwide social movement that has stayed in the limelight since Seattle. Who are these new citizens making their voices heard on both the local and global stage? Do they have a viable alternative to unfettered,free-market globalization? What stands behind their call for "democratic world governance"?

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Cover: © Michel Granger, acrylic painting

Corrections

- The cover photo of the July/August issue was taken by Pierre Emanuel Rastoin/l'Usine, Paris. It also appears on page 56.
- The photo on page 39 is by Lalo Borja.

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A PIROUETTE AROUND POVERTY

◗ Photos by Richard Emblin, text by Oscar Collazos

Two enthusiastic and seasoned choreographers open new horizons for underprivileged children in Cartagena by introducing them to modern dance

© Richard Emblin/Black Star/Studio B, Paris

The first tentative steps to taking the stage as professionals.

Alvaro Restrepo, a Colombian dancer and choreographer, could have pursued his career anywhere in the world—in New York, where he was trained, or in Europe, where he first made his mark. But in 1993, he decided to sacrifice all this to introduce modern dance to Colombia—where the discipline was barely known—and to teach it to disadvantaged children between 10 and 15 years old. He teamed up with Marie-France Delieuvin, programme director at the National Centre for Modern Dance in Angers, France, and their joint endeavour has produced astonishing results.

In 1997, four years after sowing the seeds of the new art form in Bogotá and Cali, they launched Project El Puente ("The Bridge"),which reached Cartagena a few months later. The city where Restrepo was born 42 years ago is a historic tourist centre featured on UNESCO's World Heritage List, but it cannot hide a darker side: two-thirds of its 700,000 inhabitants live below the poverty line.

Restrepo and Delieuvin's bridge is two-way. It has led a pair of dedicated performers to the outskirts of one of Cartagena's most wretched slums, while also linking the project to professionals in Europe and Latin America through festivals and exchanges.

In 1997 and 1998, Restrepo began a programme of "awareness training" that reached 480 children at Inem College in ▶

◗ Richard Emblin is a Canadian photographer living in Colombia.

Oscar Collazos is a Colombian writer and columnist who has written some 20 books. His most recent works published in Spanish include *Goodbye to the Virgin* (1994) and *Dying with Dad* (1997). An earlier book, *Young, Poor Lovers* was published in English (Aims International Books, 1983).

Lobady, a young student from Cartagena, rehearsing in front of one of the frescoes depicting a scene from Christ's passion in the San Francisco convent.

The day begins with classical ballet exercises.

Santiago rehearsing his role in "Los Virtuosos," a recent performance staged by the Academy.

Cartagena. He eventually ended up with a smaller group of 90 young dancers striving to hone their skills in a discipline that touched the very roots of their cultural and personal identity. After a few months, through a kind of natural selection that left only those determined to take part in a creative project, 22 of the children qualified for membership in the Experimental Troupe of the Academy of the Body. They were crossing the bridge, travelling from one side of the river to the other.

From outcasts to performers

Driven on by their poverty sticken backgrounds, the chosen boys and girls—now more mature, with deeper voices and changed bodies—are often tempted to shirk off school to rehearse their new dance projects everyday in the beautiful colonial-era cloisters of the 16th-century San Francisco convent, leant especially to the troupe by a religious foundation. Its wide, empty courtyard is flanked by the Centennial Park and the city's modern convention centre, while the old neighbourhood of Getsemaní lies just behind.

Without the free classes at the Academy, these children—most of whom come from the city's Nelson Mandela neighbourhood, home to families forcibly displaced by Colombia's civil war—would continue living like outcasts, scraping through life. But in the three short years the Academy has been around, they have become teenagers and grown from average pupils in outlying schools to performers of an art form, modern dance, which once seemed remote and inaccessible. The children have also come to understand that they could lead creative lives, ever since Restrepo, with unshakeable faith and endurance, arrived in their midst and began mounting shows with them that have started to attract public acclaim.

Disadvantaged teenagers build their daily routine around the dance school.

© Richard Ehrblin/Black Star/Studio B, Paris

Besides training its members, the El Puente troupe has also attained high professional standards, while some former members have become dance teachers in their own right. The natural, almost inborn Caribbean sense of rhythm has produced dancers imbued with a possibly more abstract and certainly more symbolic way of expression, yet one which ultimately springs from the great traditions of modern dance.

Tours and troubles

With meagres resources and a makeshift organization patched up by the unflagging enthusiasm of teachers and students alike, the Academy of the Body has staged two arts festivals in Cartagena, in 1998 and 1999, and presented three of its own shows. The troupe has also attended festivals in Colombia and Europe.

After their performances abroad, including one that took them to Paris in April 2000 and gave them a chance to marvel at wealth they could not dream of, the children returned to the poverty of their tiny homes to grapple once more with life in the slums. But this time they came back with the confidence of having started to do something special in their lives.

It hasn't all been a bed of roses. Despite the support of public bodies and private firms, money problems still loom over the Academy. But the iron will of Restrepo and Delieuvin is rooted in a dream, one that often overrides the reality that shaped it. The dream lives on because teachers and students in Cartagena seem to understand that the rewards of persistence are mightier than the pull of despair. ■

Breathing techniques form part of the dancers' daily training.

The Academy's directors, Marie-France Delieuvin and Alvaro Restrepo.

A young dancer carefully observes her partners.

Between classes, a moment of laughter.

© Richard Ehrblin/Black Star/Studio B, Paris

Restrepo showing his students a dance step.

Rehearsing in the recently restored colonial cloister of the San Francisco convent.

© Richard Embliny/Black Star/Studio B, Paris

VENICE: DUELS OVER TROUBLED WATERS

Piero Piazzano

How can the ecological balance of Venice be reconciled with the demands of industry? Is the highly controversial construction of mobile floodgates the solution? The decision will be made by 2001

The traveller to Venice should arrive at the end of a summer's afternoon to see the sun turn into a huge red disk and swell until it casts the lagoon's furthest islands in a fiery glow before sinking into the sea. Then, when the last tourist has left Saint Mark's Square, Venice once again becomes magical. In streets that are empty at last, the inhabitants of the world's most beautiful city open their doors, letting the few lingering visitors catch a glimpse of a time-worn, history-laden monumental staircase, or a hidden, tree-shaded garden where Giacomo Casanova may have awaited one of his mistresses two and a half centuries ago. It is the moment when the souvenir shop signs go dark and the Venetians' windows light up.

Each day, they are fewer and older. In 1951, about 175,000 people lived on one of the 118 islands connected by 160 canals which form the historic centre of Venice. In 1998, a mere 68,000 remained, and that figure will likely drop to 40,000 by 2005. If students are not counted—they are lodged by landlords who do not declare them to avoid paying taxes—residents under the age of 19 make up a tiny percentage of the population. The ▶

Italian journalist, editor in chief of the magazine *Airone*

Land and water: the historic centre of Venice is formed by 118 islands connected by 160 canals.

© Yann Arthus Bertrand/Altitude, Paris

average age, already 50 in 1998, continues to rise.

The Venetians are leaving, and they are taking their institutions with them: the Assicurazioni Generali insurance company, the daily newspaper *Il Gazzettino*, the local Rai station (the State radio and television network) and the banks. Tourists, who arrive en masse, fill the void: 10 million debarked in 1994 and 15 million are expected in 2005. The city of theatres, churches, convents, monasteries, palaces and bordellos is turning into a huge eating place. From 1976 to 1991, the number of pizzerias, restaurants and hotels increased by 144 per cent.

© De Soye/Rapho, Paris

Life goes on: when the waters rise, the temporary footbridges are brought out.

Confronting the sea with picks and shovels

Will Venice grow old and die like its inhabitants? That is anybody's guess: the truth is hard to come by in this labyrinthine city. Venice is the city of "perhaps," as unstable as the lagoon's ecological balance. It is impossible to imagine the city without its lagoon, an uncertain space, neither land nor sea, whose very name expresses absence: *lacuna* is Latin for "lack." This precarious and provisional place emerged little by little as the rivers, torrents and streams that flow across the plains on their way to the Adriatic deposited millions of cubic metres of silt.

The lagoon is not part of the sea; it is separated from the Adriatic by 50 kilometres of sandbars that end with the mouths of the Lido, Malamocco and Chioggia ports. Every six hours, the tides run through the bars, flowing in as salt water and receding as briny water. Like a gigantic lung made up of thousands of bronchial tubes, the lagoon breathes. It is not only formed by islands high enough to stand up to the sea's equinox tides. *Barene*, the sandbars that emerge at low tide, are complex ecosystems, home to plants and animals which have adapted to this environment oscillating between air and water. *Vèlme* are the mud-flats visible at low tide while *ghebi* are channels that are green with mire and seaweed through which the water leaves the lagoon at low tide.

The lagoon was bound to disappear until, one day, a group of bold men decided to make something solid out of an unstable mass. Then, from one generation the next, the Venetians battled the elements like funambulists walking a tightrope. Prepared with shovels and picks to confront the sea's efforts to upset the delicate equilibrium, they had only one thing in mind: to preserve the existence and richness of Venice, the city of stone and marble that they built on spongy marshland, as if it were on *terra firma*. Venice was a utopia: the world's most fragile city, but powerful enough to rule a far-flung empire.

Those stubborn people started by drying out the land, digging canals and deviating rivers. For example, as part of a huge project begun in 1501 and completed two centuries later, they changed the course of the lagoon's three main waterways: the Sile, the Piere and the Brenta. Then, and with increasing frequency, they launched major public and private building projects to further the civil and military development of the "most serene republic." These projects enabled merchant vessels and warships boasting the biggest drafts of their time to enter the harbour or the Arsenal.

Venice was a utopia: the world's most fragile city, but powerful enough to rule a far-flung empire.

"Although with each project the technology became more aggressive than the simple shovels and picks of the early days, these interventions have always given the lagoon enough time to develop a new balance," says Stefano Boato, professor of city planning at the University of Venice. The same was true during the operations carried out in the second half of the 19th century, when Venice was definitively integrated into the Kingdom of Italy (1866) after changing hands several times between France and Austria.

It was not until much later, between 1952 and 1969, that the city was dealt its harshest blow. A straight, 15-metre deep canal was dug so that oil tankers could berth at the industrial port of Marghera. At the same time, highly polluting chemical and petrochemical plants were built across the lagoon, pumping more and more water out of the aquifers and pouring more and more poison into the water. "At that time, the delicate balance that had always existed, and that Venetians had always managed to maintain over19 centuries of interacting with nature, was broken. The situation is becoming alarming," says Boato.

Aquatic highways for tankers and tourists

The lagoon, a unique ecosystem formed of fresh water, brine and salt water, is inexorably turning into an arm of the sea in its central portion and a swamp around the edges. During the time of the republic, it was forbidden to dig canals more than four metres deep. Today, there are veritable aquatic highways over 20 metres deep. Oil tankers, freighters and powerful speedboats that can carry hundreds of tourists create waves that destroy the sandbars and mud-flats, and cancel out the natural movements that once slowed down the advancement of the tides.

All these disruptions increase the erosion that is ruining the depths of the lagoon and eating away at the founda-

tions of buildings. The Venezia Nuova Consortium, a group of public and private companies which the Italian Public Works Ministry and Venice's Water Department have put in charge of carrying out preservation work in the lagoon, says that 1.2 million cubic metres of soil are washed away each year, while the province of Venice puts the figure at four million. The mussel fishermen who "work" the floor of the lagoon using a fishing method that is outlawed but tolerated also contribute to the erosion.

To make matters worse, fishing zones surrounded by dikes limit the tides' area of expansion. Twenty years (1950-1970) of pumping subterranean water lowered the city's ground level by 10 centimetres. Lastly, the Adriatic is rising, worsening the floods to which the city and the surrounding area fall victim.

As a result, in 1990 Venice was 23 centimetres lower than in 1908. Furthermore, between 1965 and 1995, the Venetians "forgot" to clean the city's canals, a practice that their ancestors considered indispensable for reasons both physical (to improve the circulation of tidewater) and hygienic (to wash out accumulated waste).

The neglect has proven costly. On the one hand, Venice is beleaguered by over 50 days a year of *acqua alta* ("high water"), which floods many of the streets and squares. On the other, with increasing frequency the tides are so low that vessels can no longer sail on the canals.

Hard work for meagre results

On November 4, 1966, a gigantic *acqua alta* entirely submerged Venice and the lagoon's islands for 24 hours, causing tremendous damage to the city's economy and art works, and sending a wave of panic around the world. If the water had risen a little higher, the world's most beautiful city might have been lost. And the flooding could reoccur at any time! The shock triggered countless initiatives: Italian and international commissions were set up, studies conducted, laws passed and projects proposed. Major international bodies went on the alert, UNESCO chief among them. The organization moved its office for science and technology in Europe to Venice and undertook the grandiose "Project Venice," an initiative that has given rise to a profusion of studies and meetings to pore over all the problems of the city and its lagoon: geology and morphology, the water's dynamics, chemical and biological processes, contamination, demographics, traffic and cleaning up the canals.

No other city in the world has been studied in such detail. None has been so painstakingly dissected to determine the reasons for its rise and fall. And, it must be added, never has so much hard work produced such meagre results.

All things considered, and at the risk of oversimplifying, this complicated business can be summed up in two sentences. They are written in bureaucratic jargon in law 798, the most important piece of legislation concerning Venice passed since the 1966 flood. The first sentence says that the work to save Venice must "restore the hydrogeological equilibrium of the lagoon, slow down and reverse the process of degradation and eliminate its causes."

No other city in the world has been studied in such detail. None has been so painstakingly dissected to determine the reasons for its rise and fall.

In other words, everything must be done to clean up the canals and to restore their depth to acceptable levels (other laws specify 12 metres), to re-open the fishing lagoons, and to recreate the sandbars and mud-flats. But a harmless-sounding sentence in the same law specifies that all these operations must be carried out while "preserving the area's productive and economic interests."

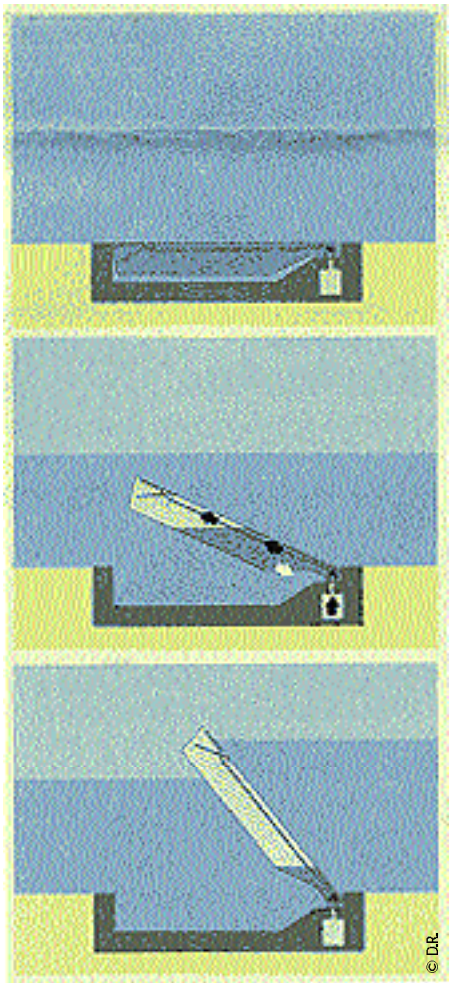
In other words, the bottoms of the canals must be raised but oil tankers must not be prevented from travelling through them, the size of the lagoon's harbours must be reduced but the current level of traffic must be maintained, the tidal swells must be contained but vessels must be allowed to continue carrying swarms of tourists to the islands of Torcello and Murano. The law's authors seem to be the direct heirs to the playwright Carlo Goldoni and his Harlequin who served two masters.

The system of mobile dikes and floodgates planned as a solution has been a bone of contention for nearly 20 years, setting off many debates and discussions between engineers and politicians. It is called MOSE, the Italian name for Moses and an acronym that stands for *Modulo Sperimentale Elettromeccanico*, a prototype floodgate that was tested in the Treporti canal between 1988 and 1992. After years of studies and numerous variations, Project Moses was adopted by the Venezia Nuova Consortium. The plan is to equip the entrances of the Lido, Chioggia and Malamocco ports with a system of mobile floodgates: chests that are 20 metres wide, 20 to 30 metres high and four to five metres deep.

In normal conditions and as long as the tide's amplitude does not exceed one metre, the water-filled chests will lie on the floor of the canal. When the tide is dubbed "exceptional" (an average of seven a year and 20 in 1996), a hydraulic system will fill the chests with air to raise them. Since the chests are connected to the canal's floor with stakes driven into the mud, ▶

The city's delicate equilibrium was upset by the digging of a canal deep enough to allow oil tankers to berth at the industrial port of Marghera.

© Graziano Arici/Grazia Neri, Milan (Marghera)



At exceptionally high tide, a hydraulic system fills the chests with air. They lift and turn into gates that cut the lagoon off from the sea.

▶ they work by rising like a gate that closes, becoming dikes that cut the lagoon off from the sea. Under the plan, 18 floodgates will be set up at the entrance to the port of Chioggia, 20 at Malamocco and two sets of 20 and 21 separated by an intermediate harbour basin at the entrance to the Lido.

Furor over floodgates

According to estimates, this enormous task will require eight years, 6,000 workers and 3,700 billion lire (approximately $1.8 billion). The city of Venice puts the project's total cost at 5,334 billion lire (in 1992 prices), or some $2.6 billion—not including maintenance.

"These mobile dikes must be built," affirms Philippe Bourdeau, a professor at Brussels' Free University and chairman of the international committee of experts named by the Italian government to evaluate the project. "The mobile floodgates," he says, "are, along with raising the ground level and the other planned measures, the best way to save Venice for the next 100 years."

"These mobile dikes must be absolutely avoided," replies Stefano Boato, along with the Green Party, the Italia Nostra environmental group, Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and other environmental organizations, which say that the project would have a disastrous effect on the fragile ecosystem. But the municipality of Venice, together with the Environment and Cultural Heritage ministries, are leading the camp of those invoking the precautionary principle. They argue that the lagoon's geomorphological, hydraulic and biological balance must be restored—for example, by cleaning up the canals, which began in 1998 (see box), and raising the ground level—before any decisions about the mobile dikes are made.

In addition to this controversy, other questions have arisen. For example, the city's autonomy is at stake. The Department of Water, which depends on the Public Works Ministry in Rome, and the companies that make up the Consortium, which include major public and private corporations (such as Fiat), have few or no ties with Venice, whose population has been accustomed to solving its problems alone for 2,000 years.

Fear of oil spills

And then there is the economic aspect: $2.6 billion, a sum that rises with each passing day, is a tremendous amount of money. If all of it is allocated to a single project, what will be left for other initiatives and for the small Venetian companies that could carry them out? When all is said and done, the big corporations in Milan, Turin and Rome would reap the benefits and Venice would have to settle for the crumbs.

The debate has been raging for a long time. In November 1998, the project's environmental impact commission, appointed by the Environment Ministry and chaired by Maria Rosa Vittadini, an architecture professor at the University of Venice, issued a negative assessment and requested the Consortium to review the entire project. One month later, a ministerial commission published a similar review, which was annulled in June 2000 by the regional administrative tribunal of the Veneto. The latest news is that, during a meeting of experts held in Rome in July 2000, Prime Minister Giuliano Amato said the final decision would lie with his office and that it would be made at a cabinet meeting by the end of the year.

But what if Venice's real problems is not the exceptional tide, such as the one that struck the city in 1966? And what if the next disaster comes not from the lagoon but from the sea? Each year, 25 million tons of freight is shipped on the lagoon, half of which is oil and petroleum products. A single oil tanker accident would be enough to cause incalculable damage to the ecosystem, cover the canals with a thick coat of petroleum and leave greasy, viscous streaks on the foundations of palaces and churches forever. On November 29, 1995, five tons of light fuel spilled into the lagoon, forming a huge slick that drifted for four days. Was that a warning?

In the city of masks, the fiery glow of the beautiful red sunsets over the city's palaces and churches, which enchant tourists the year round, may not be solely the gift of nature. That extra shade of red may well come from air pollution arising from Marghera's petrochemical facilities. ■

Pierre Lasserre and Angelo Mazollo (eds.), *The Venice Lagoon Ecosystem*, UNESCO

INSULA AND THE CANAL CLEAN-UP

Any city can be compared with a big machine that needs to be overhauled and repaired on a regular basis.

This analogy is especially apt for Venice, with its fifty-something kilometres of canals that accumulate nearly half a million cubic metres of waste and mud each year, its 454 bridges and its 100 kilometres of banks lined by the cellars of palaces, churches, monasteries and convents, pictures of which are reproduced in art books around the world.

Although the city's regular maintenance would seem an obvious necessity, it took years of discussions to come about. The result is called Insula, a mixed company (52 per cent of the shares are owned by the municipality and 48percent by four private companies) set up in July 1997 to manage the urban machine of Venice. In slightly less than three years, Insula, basing its work on a huge mass of studies conducted by UNESCO in Venice, has dredged over 22 kilometres of canals, extracted 123,000 cubic metres of mud and restored 79 bridges. Soon it will start laying fibre optic cables, because to survive, Venice must also be on the cutting edge of science and research. ■

CHINA'S MIGRANT CHILDREN FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS

James Irwin

Despite China's educational achievement, migrant children in the country's big cities are struggling to find a place in school. For many, the unlicensed route is at best, the only option

© Jacques Langevin/Sygma, Paris

All the children at this primary school in a Beijing suburb come from China's provinces.

Every semester, Li Shumei and Yi Benyao turn away hundreds of applicants seeking to study at their school, located in a former paint factory in western Beijing. It's not because they're choosey: they know all too well that these children may not have another chance of stepping into a classroom. But there is simply not enough space to satisfy demand.

This unlicensed school caters to over 1,300 children from 28 Chinese provinces. "Many of the kids have to ride four different buses to get here in the mornings, it takes them up to two hours," says Li. "And they work hard knowing how difficult it is for their parents to afford it." What makes these children different from other city-dwellers is simply that they belong to China's "floating population," a label used to describe people who are not permanently registered in their current place of residence. Most are the children of peasants who have left the poverty-stricken countryside in search of work in big cities.

Employed in menial jobs with no security or healthcare, migrants are responsible for the lion's share of the tough physical labour that has transformed urban skylines in the past decade or so. While the government puts the "floating population" at 100 million, Western analysts estimate the figure closer to 150 million, making the phenomenon one of the largest rural-to-urban migrations in history.

This migration began in 1979, when the commune system was dismantled. Agricultural productivity boomed, fewer hands were needed to work the land, so families headed to cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. In the mid-1980s, as rural incomes steadily fell, the trickle became a flood, prompting municipal authorities to tighten migration rules. Migrants would now be required to get temporary residence permits and letters of employment before coming to the city. In practice, tens of millions never ▶

Shanghai-based Canadian journalist

obtain such permits. As such, they are not registered in the place where they are living, contrary to permanent migrants whose move is officially sanctioned. Their temporary status exposes them to widespread discrimination. When it comes to education, their only option, until recently, has been to enroll their children in an unlicensed school.

Li Shumei left Henan Province in 1993 to work in a clothing market in Beijing. At the time, she says, there were no schools for migrant children in the capital. Nor were they allowed to enroll in city schools. A former teacher, she started educating a few children in her home before starting up a school with her husband. "For our pupils in the lower grades, the level of Chinese and mathematics is about the same as in regular schools," said Li. Teachers have to make do with a lack of books and other materials, but Li explains that one of the greatest challenges is to help pupils overcome a sense of inferiority wrought by their second-class status. And because the school is unlicensed, they face difficulties re-entering the educational mainstream to continue in higher grades, though many, once they reach the age of 12, return to their home provinces to continue their schooling while living with relatives.

Some of school's teachers are recent graduates from the students' home provinces, others are retired instructors from Beijing. Their wages are less than half those paid in the mainstream, with no benefits. All expenses incurred in running the school, including salaries, are derived from paltry tuition fees—about $100 a year. Li was fortunate enough to receive a generous donation from a retired couple in Los Angeles who read about the school in an overseas Chinese newspaper. The funds were put towards relocating the school when police ordered its removal from an earlier site.

According to the Ford Foundation, there are between 200 and 300 unlicensed schools operating in the capital which struggle to provide schooling for an estimated 100,000 migrant children, many of whom receive no education at all. Dorothy Solinger, a political science professor at the University of California at Irvine and author of *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China*, estimated that only 40 per cent of migrant children between five and twelve attended school in Beijing, compared with 100 per cent of native children. This situation is mirrored in other booming cities like Shenzhen and Shanghai. Chen Yi Fu, principal of the Hu Wan Elementary school in north-eastern Shanghai, estimates that "in some migrant communities, only 20 to 30 per cent of children go to school." Official statistics differ. According to a 1996 study conducted by the Department of Basic Education, the average enrollment ratio of migrant children stood at 96.2 per cent. The study attributed non attendance to overcrowding, high fees and an unfavourable home environment.

"We actually prefer it when the government leaves us alone. When they visit the school, they usually either try to close us down or fine us for various things."

Media exposure and pressure from several delegates from the National People's Congress led to a change in the law in May 1998. The central government decreed that unlicensed schools could exist and that it is unlawful for large municipalities to deny entrance to migrant children between six and 14 who had lived for more than six months in the area. City governments often responded by jacking tuition fees to impossibly high levels for migrants—up to $440 annually, when the average yearly income of a migrant worker in Beijing is an estimated $600. And to date, only a handful of cities, such as Wuhan and Guiyang, have granted legal status to migrant schools according to the *People's Economic Journal*.

One of the greatest challenges is to help pupils overcome a sense of inferiority wrought by their second-class status.

For Chen Yi Fu, a native of Anhui Province, "the Shanghai government doesn't feel they are responsible for educating our children, even though the latter belong to families from rural areas who do all the hard jobs." Yi Fu's school caters to children from 13 provinces, who pay close to $100 per year for tuition. "They are the lucky ones," he said, bemoaning the $7,000 rent he has to pay each year to the army, which owns the land.

Besides the 1998 law however, there are signs that the situation is slowly changing. Recognizing that China's economic miracle has clearly not benefitted all regions, the central government has embarked on a massive scheme to invest in the country's hinterland. Moreover, "there are indications that in some respects, things are getting slightly better for rural migrants in big cities," said Solinger. "The municipal governments in some cities are now more permissive about letting parents set up schools of their own. More migrants can afford to pay the extra fee required for their children to attend city schools, not to mention that some migrant parents can now afford to purchase the card which enables their children to attend city schools on city terms."

Over the years however, people from the provinces have become accustomed to fending for themselves to provide education. "We actually prefer it when the government leaves us alone," says Chen Yi Fu. "When they visit the school, they usually either try to close us down or fine us for various things."

But with the likelihood that China will soon join the World Trade Organization and compete in world agricultural markets, a large portion of the country's 800 million farmers might find it even more difficult to survive in the countryside. If current trends continue, there is little doubt that migrant education, and more broadly, migrant rights, will become an increasingly pressing issue on the government's books. ■

EDUCATIONAL LEAPS

When the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in 1949, a mere 20 per cent of the country's primary school-age children were enrolled in school while 80 per cent of the population was illiterate. Education has been an unwavering priority of this country of 1.2 billion people. After efforts at universalizing primary education, the government passed a law in 1986 extending compulsory education to nine years. The country has recorded some remarkable achievements over the past fifty years. In 1998, the net enrollment ratio[1] of primary school-age children reached 98.9 per cent, while adult illiteracy stands at 16.37 per cent, according to a report[2] prepared for the World Education Forum in Dakar (Senegal, April 2000). The report stresses that efforts are now being focused on improving access to education in poor regions and those with minority populations, facilitating fundraising for educational purposes and raising the overall quality of teachers. ■

1. Number of children enrolled who are in the officially defined primary school age-group, expressed as a percentage of the total population of that age-group.
2. China's country report can be found at: http://www2.unesco.org/efa/wef/countryreport/china

Focus

The other face of globalization

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Now that globalization has reached the furthest corners of the planet, the world is said to have been globalized —either for better, as some argue (pp 19-20), or for worse according to the critics (pp 20-21). Faced with the universal and uniform spread of this revolutionary process, these critics have created a kind of international opposition movement made up of previously fragmented groups, drawn together by the inseparable nature of local and global issues. Seattle was their spotlight.

This dossier offers a guided tour through this constellation of movements opposed to the current style of globalization and spearheaded by NGOs (pp 24 to 32). Though their backgrounds, demands and actions are radically different, these U.S. environmental activists, Philippine ethnic minorities, indigenous groups in Ecuador, peasants in Burkina Faso, Indian fisherfolk or janitors in Silicon Valley have joined to attack the same targets and support the same aspiration: a new notion of citizenship that balances the might of business with a much stronger political realm. Sharing experience and capitalizing on knowledge have thus become key elements in their strategy (p 33).

But what shape should the future "democratic world governance" take? Current plans are still vague (pp 34-35), while the legitimacy of these NGOs appears to rest solely upon the relevance of the issues they raise and their ability to develop ideas that can be turned into action (pp 35-36). ■

Dossier concept and co-ordination by René Lefort, director of the *Unesco Courier,* and staff journalist Ivan Briscoe.

Renewing the state

Kidane Mengisteab

A native of Eritrea, the author is head of the department of African and African-American Studies at Pennsylvania State University and has written several works on globalization and African development

Many view globalization as a technology-driven global order that has led to an intensification of interconnectedness among nations. This, however, is merely one facet of globalization, and does not presuppose the ideological homogenization or the rapid retrenchment of the welfare state that is currently underway.

The dispute over globalization is not about the intensification of global interconnectedness. Rather, it is over the vision of the global system that globalization projects. This vision entails a global economic system with identifiable rules of behaviour in trade, finance, taxation, investment policy, intellectual property rights, and currency convertibility, all of which are crafted along neo-liberal principles with minimal governmental regulation. As the political economist Ellen Wood perceptively notes, this vision of a global system represents a new phase of capitalism which is "more universal, more unchallenged, more pure and more unadulterated than ever before."

Opponents of globalization are addressing genuine problems. But it is uncertain whether they will succeed in reversing globalization or even in mitigating its adverse impacts

For many critics, globalization is essentially an anti-democratic process that excludes the interests of a wide range of groups. But the process is not shaped by market forces alone. It is only made possible by the acquiescence if not active support of governments, especially those in advanced countries.

Governments in developing countries, meanwhile, are often said to be unable to stand up to globalization without incurring severe costs. The government of South Africa, for example, could be punished by capital flight if it insists on implementing its agenda of social reform. The masses of South Africa, however, are likely to sustain heavier costs if the government abandons its reforming mandate. Faced with such a dilemma, governments have generally selected the side of capital for a simple reason: as the economist Paul Krugman has noted, the collapse of communism has taken the heart out of opposition to capitalism.

The list of problems caused by globalization is long. In low-income countries, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, where governments have been unable or unwilling to provide their populations with even the most basic protection from the new phase of global capitalism and structural adjustment programmes, the people's plight has been particularly severe.

Opponents of globalization are addressing genuine problems. But it is uncertain whether they will succeed in reversing globalization or even in mitigating its adverse impacts. To begin with, many of them are badly organized. Most of them have also rallied around specific issues instead of articulating a comprehensive counter vision. At this point, the counter vision they project appears to be a global system which is not shaped by the narrow interests of capital but which accommodates the interests of diverse social groups. This vision, however, is not yet well developed.

Furthermore, these opponents have yet to develop viable strategies to constrain globalization. Some argue for weakening or even abolishing institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, which they view as agents of globalization. But to the extent that these organizations are effective agents of globalization, it is unclear why business interests and governments would allow this to happen. The relevance of these bodies is only likely to decline if Third World countries, especially middle-income ones, begin to reduce their dependence on them under pressure from their populations.

Yet the main problem faced by these critics is that many of them do not see the relevance of the state. A successful struggle for genuine popular democracy can liberate the state from the grip of corporate and financial interests, turning it into a critical agent for the promotion of broad social interests. Many NGOs rely instead on civil society, though this cannot substitute the state in policy-making. The struggle against globalization is essentially a struggle for democracy: the state cannot be bypassed, but must be won. ■

Gold-dust is dust
the while it lies
untravelled
in the mine,
And aloes-wood mere
fuel is upon
its native ground:
And gold shall win his
highest worth when
from his goal ungoal'd;
And aloes sent
to foreign parts grow
costlier than gold.

"The Tale of Nur Al-Din and Son,"
The Thousand and One Nights

1

New battle lines

Social pioneers come of age

Julie Fisher

Non-governmental organizations took centre stage in Seattle, but many have been spinning their web for several decades around the globe

Everywhere we turn there is good economic news. The massive growth of the global economy, fed by revolutionary changes in communication, promises unending prosperity that will, it is said, benefit even the poorest people on earth.

Protestors in Seattle who questioned the role of the World Trade Organization in supporting the present contours of globalization were widely portrayed in the media as new activists focusing on small issues such as the fate of the sea turtle. Yet the "Battle in Seattle" was but one tip of a mountain range of non-governmental challenges to politics as usual.

This worldwide explosion of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) actually began about thirty years ago, in response to the intertwined crises posed by poverty, population, and environmental degradation. Population growth can lead to deforestation or soil exhaustion, and thus increased poverty. The latter fuels migration to giant urban centres, or to more remote areas where the cycle begins anew. Moreover, environmental destruction by multinational corporations can further poverty by disrupting the traditional co-existence between people and the land.

NGOs, including the grassroots movements featured in this issue, have focused on these priorities for some time and have pushed governments to do so as well. The recent surge of activism testifies not to a change in purpose, but a growing realization that certain shared problems are partly caused by the common root of globalization. Targets like the agencies of international trade and finance are hardly new, though their current prominence reflects an era of much greater NGO co-ordination in the face of rapid economic change and unresponsive national governments.

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Protesting against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, November 1999.

The real question, however, is whether a growing global civil society, even in concert with willing governments, could begin to match the magnitude of the global challenge. No one alive today can answer this question, but an overview of what is happening may provide some clues.

International NGOs (INGOs) generally focus on development, relief, refugees, human rights or ▶

Programme officer at the Kettering Foundation, an institute based in Dayton, Ohio, devoted to research into improving the workings of democracy. Her most recent book is Nongovernments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World (Kumarian Press, 1997).

democratization. As of 1995 there were an estimated 20,000 INGOs with branches in at least three countries, plus 5,000 or more northern NGOs working internationally that are based in only one developed country.

Although INGOs have quadrupled in number since 1970, their contribution to relief and development pales beside the demands posed by increasing numbers of complex human emergencies. In 1995 only about $10 billion of $60 billion in overseas development assistance flowed through NGOs.

Yet these organizations have become prominent global players. They lobby official international organizations with increasing frequency and success, and have become important actors in agenda-setting meetings. From the Montreal Protocol regulating ozone emissions in 1987 to the 1994 Cairo Population Conference and the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference, they have accompanied their partner organizations in keeping such issues as human rights, women and environmental deterioration on the front burner.

The most dramatic chapter in the NGO story has been their proliferation in the global "South." Beginning about thirty years ago, increasing numbers of well-educated young people took advantage of foreign financial assistance to create NGOs. Although a few organizers created local "counterparts" to INGOs, most others used funds from several donors to define their own programmes. Several of these organizations provided protection from political repression.

Almost everywhere, this process depended on partnerships between two types of NGOs: grassroots organizations (GROs) and grassroots support organizations (GRSOs). Grassroots organizations have local members and help develop their own communities. Although some, such as women's groups, are new, others evolved from traditional community organizations such as rotating credit societies that have existed for thousands of years. There are now probably several hundred thousand GROs in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Faced with the deterioration of their environment and the increasing impoverishment of the 1980s, GROs and local individuals began organizing networks and movements among themselves. A network of lane committees in Oranji, Pakistan, for example, has provided clean water and sewage for 100,000 people. An estimated 50,000 largely professional GRSOs, meanwhile, help channel international support to these lower levels. In Bolivia, for example, a set of GRSOs focuses on propagating solar greenhouse technologies.

Other organizations work on corruption or human rights. An anti-corruption centre in Maharashtra, supported by a GRO network, succeeded in getting forty local revenue officers dismissed and has received requests for help from other localities intent on pursuing complaints through the courts. This type of political activism sometimes reaches the global level, as the Philippine indigenous leader Victoria Tauli-Corpuz explains (p. 24-25).

The retreat of authoritarian rule, meanwhile, has led to the creation of new types of NGOs concentrating on broader democratic processes such as public deliberation, voter registration and election monitoring, and even to the election of some grassroots leaders to local office. Many NGOs also advocate major political changes, though protests are not always at the street-level. A Brazilian NGO, for instance, provides citizens with a toll-free "green phone" to report environmental crises. Nor is there a clear distinction between advocacy and collaboration. One network in India, the Integrated Child Development Service, campaigns for political change through both NGOs and "chapters" in federal and state governments.

Stronger civil societies are also emerging in Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. Only a minority of the estimated 75,000 "Eastern" NGOs were previously tied to Communist regimes, with the rest created or resurrected by an inflow of foreign assistance after 1989. Because these NGOs emerged with the collapse of governmental social services, they are more likely to be service providers than tied to members at the local level. Indeed, some forms of local organization such as co-operatives acquired a bad name under Communism.

Among the more innovative NGOs in this region are those organized in response to the emerging environmental crises of the 1980s. Originating as quasi-opposition movements, they have continued to challenge governments. Microcredit, initiated in the developing world, has also gained at least a toehold in the transitional countries.

The non-governmental challenge to mindless globalization is not opposition to profits, but rather support for broader ownership

The non-profit sector has also grown in the developed countries. In the United States, for example, 70 per cent of non-profit organizations are less than thirty years old. Even more recent are the protest and other social change movements fuelled by the growth of the Internet, such as those described by student activist Andrea del Moral (p. 22-23).

If nothing else, this overview highlights the difficulties in mapping a complex, vast and dynamic global civil society still in its infancy. On a global level, some business networks focus on sustainable development, and national NGOs as diverse as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and Working Capital in New Hampshire (U.S.) promote businesses. Thus, the non-governmental challenge to mindless globalization is not opposition to profits, but rather support for broader ownership and competition. Most importantly, true civil society is more than a collection of NGOs, but rather a measure of how citizens associate, talk and act together in public life.

Much has been made of the Internet and how it may contribute to a stronger civil society. Yet though the Internet has helped create global coalitions on hundreds of issues, billions of people still have no access to a telephone, much less to a computer. Even if people gain access, they may be more likely to see an advert for a soft drink than learn how to purify water. Ultimately, the contribution of the Internet to the governance of globalization will depend on the human ties that are established off-line. ■

When the people fought against slavery, or apartheid, or colonialism, they did not speak in terms of sharing better the benefits of slavery or apartheid or colonialism. They fought the systems of slavery, apartheid and colonialism themselves. So too, we cannot just talk of sharing better the benefits of globalization. We have to fight the system of globalization we have today.

Martin Khor, director of the Third World Network

Globalization: a moral imperative

Jagdish Bhagwati

A leading international trade theorist argues that free markets and integration into the world economy are key to making a dent on poverty

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Winners and losers: Indian farmers protest against the effects of globalization.

"Globalization" has become today's buzzword. It has also become a battle ground for two radically opposed groups. There are the "anti-globalists" who fear globalization and stress only its downside, seeking therefore powerful interventions aimed at taming, if not (unwittingly) crippling it. Then there are the "globalists" (a class to which I belong) who celebrate globalization instead, emphasize its upside, while seeking only to ensure that its few rough edges be handled through appropriate policies that serve to make globalization yet more attractive.

Many anti-globalists consider the central problem of globalization to be its amorality, or even its immorality. But these critics have too blanket an approach to globalization. The word covers a variety of phenomena that characterize an integrating world economy: trade, short-term capital flows, direct foreign investment, immigration, cultural convergence et al. The sins of one of the above cannot be visited upon the virtues of another. Some are benign even when largely unregulated whereas others can be fatal if left wholly to the marketplace.

In particular, the freeing of trade is largely benign: if I exchange some of my toothpaste for some of your toothbrushes, we will both be better off than if we did not trade at all. It would require a wild imagination, and a deranged mind, to think that such freeing of trade leads to debilitating economic crises. But only ideologues would deny that the hasty freeing of short-term capital flows, under pressure from what I have called in *Foreign Affairs* (May 1998) the US-Treasury Complex, was what helped to precipitate the huge Asian financial crisis. Equally, it is illogical to believe, as non-economists who fear globalization do, that freeing of trade is bad because the freeing of short-term capital flows led to a debilitating financial and economic crisis and could do so again. In fact, while there are some obvious similarities between free trade and free capital flows—e.g. that segmentation of markets creates efficiency losses—the economic and political dissimilarities are even more compelling and policymakers cannot ignore them.

Anti-globalist critics are in fact often reacting viscerally to a much larger issue: the victory of capitalism over its arch rival, communism. For campus idealists who have always looked for alternatives to what they conventionally consider to be the greed and lack of social conscience that characterize capitalism, the situation is psychologically intolerable. Some have turned to street theatre, nihilism and the anti-intellectualism that has been manifest in the last few years. The more sophisticated have succumbed to a stereotypical representation of corporations as the "evil" forces of capitalism that have captured the state, democratic institutions, and even international bodies such as the World Trade Organization.

What these critics often forget is that certain economic freedoms are basic to prosperity and social well-being under any conditions, and are thus of the highest moral value. Property rights and markets, for instance, provide incentives to produce and allocate resources efficiently, and can in turn strengthen democracy by allowing a means of sustenance outside pervasive government structures. The quality and breadth of democracy can then be enlarged as excluded groups, such as women and the poor, are

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pulled into literacy, gainful employment and better health through higher public spending or the spread of economic incentives.

Critics nevertheless go on to maintain that the global spread of free markets and free trade is responsible for continuing poverty in poor countries, and for alleged growth in inequality between and within countries. Labour unions in the rich countries also fear that their workers are being hurt by trade in cheap labour-using goods from poor countries.

But I do not think these concerns are well-founded. In India which has almost a quarter of the world's poor, there is good evidence that autarchic and anti-market policies produced abysmally low growth rates at 3.5 per cent annually over a quarter of a century, with a correspondingly negligible impact on poverty. Since growth rates picked up since the 1980s,poverty has declined. Higher growth rates in turn depend on several factors; but openness to trade and direct investment and a skilful use of markets are definitely an important contributory factor.

As for inequality among nations, it is precisely those countries that embraced integration into the world economy, i.e. the Far Eastern Four and then the ASEAN countries, which raced ahead with dramatic growth rates whereas several countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia that looked inwards failed to deliver growth and also made little dent on poverty.

The evidence on trade and investment impoverishing our workers is also flawed. My own research suggests that the downward pressure on workers' wages due to technical change has been dampened, not magnified, by trade with the poor countries. Research also shows that big corporations use abroad technologies similar to those at home, instead of exploiting lower standards or forcing them yet lower through their financial clout.

One result of these mistaken arguments against globalization has been an insistent clamour for certain environmental and labour standards to be linked to rules on international trade. But by seeking to create new "obstacles" to free trade, you undermine the freeing of trade, while mixing up trade with a moral agenda undermines that very moral agenda. It gives other countries the definite impression that you are using ethical rhetoric to mask protectionist self-interest.

The notion that global free trade and investment are responsible for poverty, inequality, lowering of standards and harming social progress is little short of astonishing. Yet it is given currency by national politicians and international bureaucrats who think that going along is a way of getting along. In denying the virtues of globalization, they actually harm the very causes they profess to embrace. ■

Nobody forces you to eat at McDonald's.

Paul Krugman, U.S. economist (1953-)

Tomorrow's humane economy

Jean-Louis Laville

Countering the previous viewpoint, the author turns to history to show that belief in the market as the best of all social orders is an old ideal that does not bear up to scrutiny

Since the early 1980s, when the Thatcherite and Reaganite revolutions were in full swing, the doctrine of neo-liberalism appears to have staked itself out across the countries of the world without meeting much serious opposition. But negative reactions to the spread of free market philosophy have ensued as the damage it has caused — in terms of inequalities, impoverishment, social exclusion and environmental destruction—come to light.

Supporters of the free market advocate deregulation to the extent that all human activity would be run by the private sector, while public authorities would be left to manage the tools of coercion and law within a given territory:namely, the army, the judicial system, and (if only in part) the police and prisons. On the other side, supporters of a more humane economy, who have grown hugely in number over recent years, back a rather different formula for the good society: "yes to the market economy, not to the market society." In other words,they insist on the need to resurrect and re-establish regulation in new and varied forms so that it can cover today's global dimensions of economic activity.

The differences between these two broad schools of thought is at least three centuries old, beginning when the old divine order— in which political authority was enmeshed —collapsed. At the start of the 17th century, Galileo confounded the Scriptures by proving that the Earth rotated around the Sun. Shortly after, philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke argued that the social order was not grounded in Providence, but in the decisions of individuals. The medieval dogma holding that all power came from God, who assigned each person his or her "natural" place in society, was shattered. From then on, societies faced a new challenge: defining the "social contract" that linked people with each other and with the state.

French sociologist and author of several books on the future of work and the social economy, including Une troisième voie pour le travail ("A Third Way for Work," Desclée de Brouwer, 1999) and L'Economie solidaire: une perspective internationale ("Economic Solidarity:An International Perspective," Desclée de Brouwer, 2000).

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Bearing the burden of the IMF in Bangkok earlier this year.

Two radically opposed forms of contract were put forward. The first "political" form placed its trust in the good will of individuals, who could freely decide the shape of the new social order. The second "economic" option suspected that this trust in fallible, fickle human nature was open to abuse. A new social order, these latter theorists maintained, needed rock-solid foundations—namely economic "laws," which are "natural" and thus unchanging.

The first such law is that everyone acts primarily out of his or her own personal interest, the main thrust of which is a desire for riches. This impulse is shared universally in all societies, the theory goes, and will eventually be the best method for organizing all of them. As a result, the market theory took its first step towards a utopian vision in which everything is subjected to its rules.

It is false to claim, as many neo-liberals do, that today's enhanced market ideology is essentially modern, and that the revival of tougher "political" regulatory mechanisms to check the supremacy of private interests over the public good would be a step backwards. Scottish economist Adam Smith outlined the fundamentals of the free market two centuries ago; regulation came much later.

In the 19th century, a number of very tightly controlled national and international markets gave way to a much more open market. The pendulum swung again, however, and as a result of the market's failure to deliver a workable, peaceful society, markets were refined so that they today include "rules, institutions and networks that control and monitor the creation of supply and demand and the relationship between them," according to French economist Jean Gadrey. But these interventions are now being challenged by a new wave of deregulation. Defining a market economy, says Gadrey, has hence become an "extremely contentious and political" issue—as well as a very urgent one.

A second flawed argument used by neo-liberals is that the market economy is the only source of wealth, and in particular, wealth for all (the notorious "trickle-down" theory). The past 20 years, however, have testified to widening inequality, with the three richest people now wielding a fortune greater than the combined GDP of the world's 48 poorest nations.

The third error committed by today's free-marketeers is their denial of the fact that the real economy in fact rests on three foundations, as the Hungarian émigré political scientist Karl Polanyi argued. In a market economy, the terms of trade are fixed by prices that various participants in the markets decide upon on the basis of their interests. But hidden in these calculations are all sorts of non-market variables and contributions, starting with government aid and subsidies to firms.

In the non-market economy, the distribution of goods and services is largely handled by the public sector, which operates according to the rules set down by democratically elected authorities. This is the "welfare state." But beyond this, in the third, non-monetary economy, the priority rests on reciprocity, with services distributed by groups or people according to the social links that bind them together, whether in families, associations or mutual support groups.

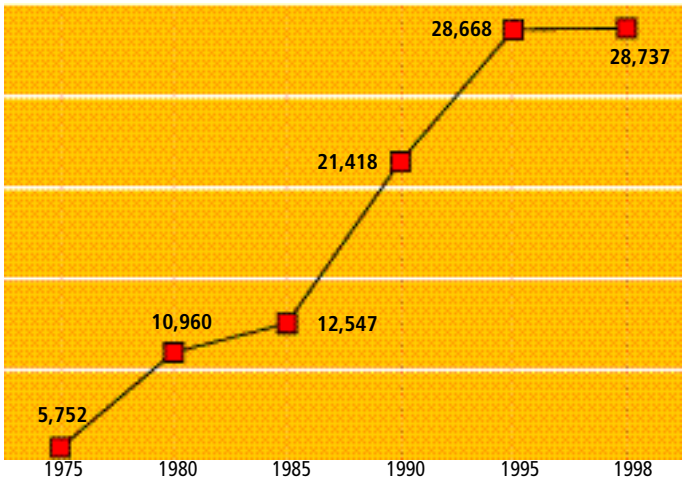
Firms benefit from training and teaching conducted in the home, and thus draw on a fund of "social capital." Likewise, in the expanding service sector, businesses take advantage of intangible investments like education, which depends largely on the public sector, as well as on orders and investments from public authorities. They also depend heavily on the political decisions made by governments.

These examples go to prove that neither the oft-mentioned distinction between a market and non-market economy nor the claim that the former is the only source of wealth survive critical examination. Instead, we should adopt a more realistic and less ideologically driven model: that of a plural economy. By putting these various beliefs up for discussion, we can escape the tyranny of a market conceived as an abstract and impersonal norm imposed on everyone. Tomorrow's humane economy can only be built through the interaction of regulated markets, states and democratic civil societies. ■

Unequal gains

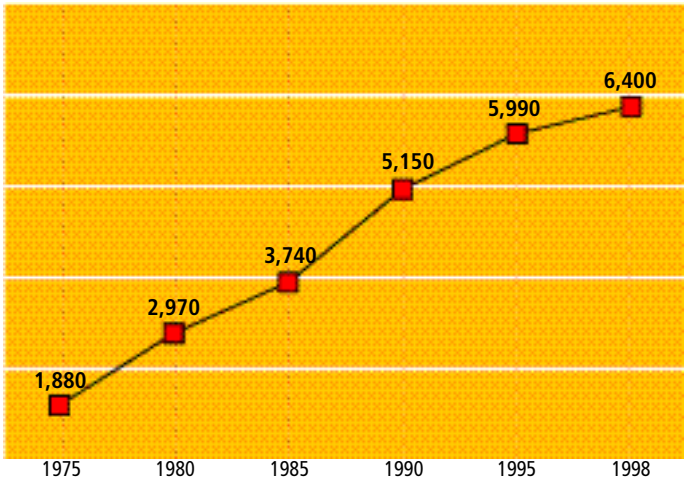
While the world is growing richer, inequality is increasing and extreme poverty remains deeply entrenched, as critics of globalization's current style are quick to underline.

The world's GDP (US$ billions)



Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2000*

The world's GDP per capita (1995 US$)



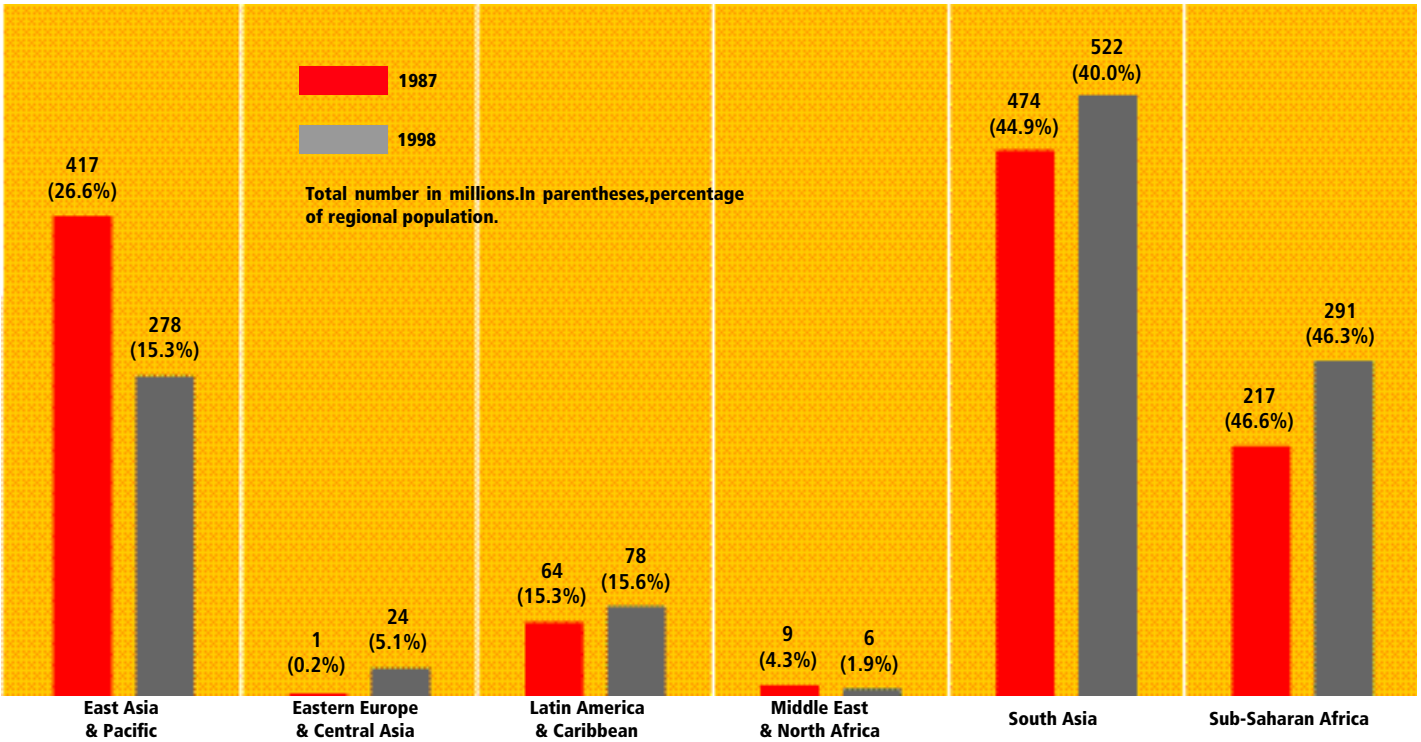
Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report 2000*

Global GDP has grown fivefold in real terms over the past 25 years (top left), though over the same period global GDP per capita only increased 3.5 times (above, left). This growth, however, has not been shared by all.

The absolute number of people living on less than a dollar a day in developing countries has remained practically unchanged (slightly fewer than 1.2 billion) over the past decade (below). The income gap between the richest and poorest 20 per cent of world population has more than doubled over the past 40 years (opposite page, top left), and nearly tripled if we look at the world's five richest and five poorest countries (opposite page, top right). These disparities are even more striking in specific areas: the poorest 20 per cent, for example, only account for 0.2 per cent of the world's Internet users, while the richest 20 per cent make up 93.3 per cent of users (opposite page, centre).

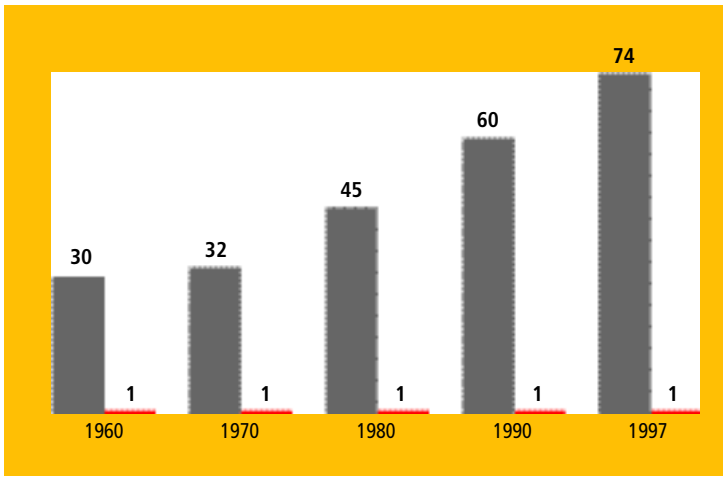
Finally, a comparison between the sales of top corporations and the GDP of a number of countries offers a telling illustration of the sheer power of big business (opposite page, below).

People living on less than $1 per day in developing and transitional economies



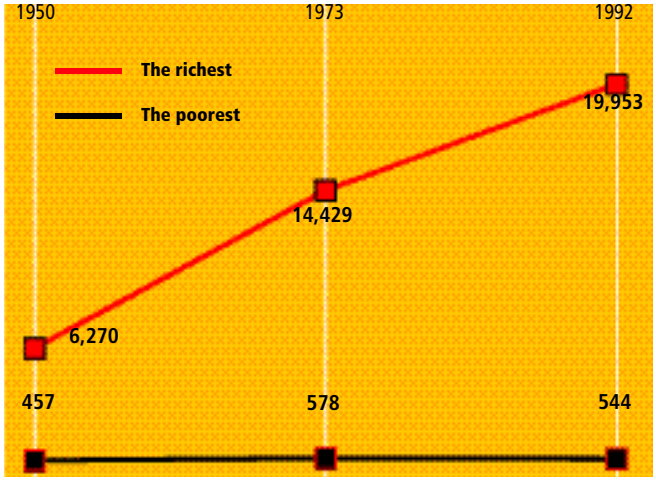
Source: World Bank Poverty Net

Ratio of income earned by richest 20% against poorest 20% of world population



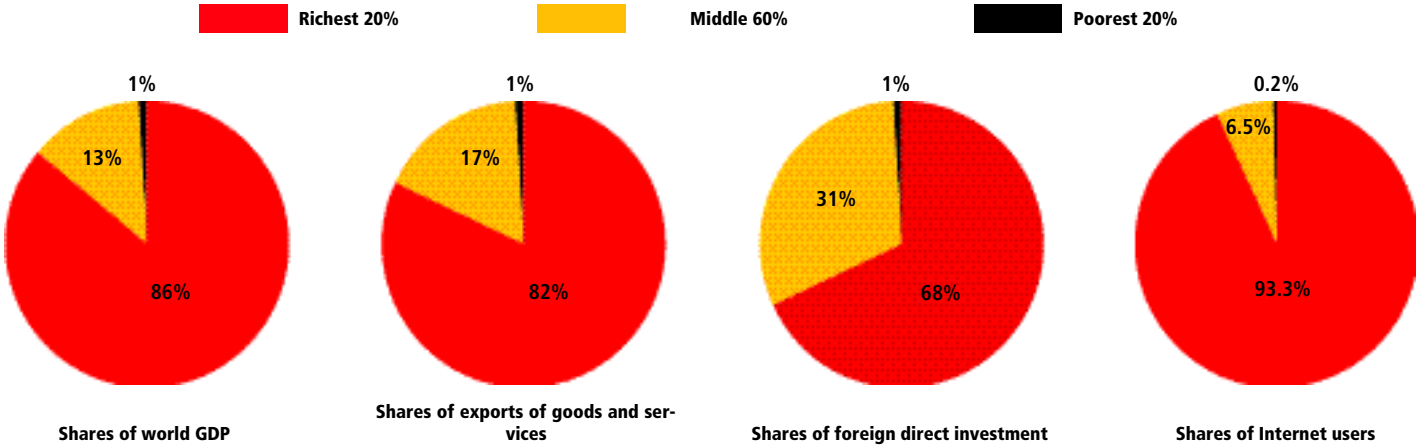
Source: UNDP *Human Development Reports*

The trajectory of the world's five richest and poorest countries, 1950-1992 (GDP per capita in 1990 US$)



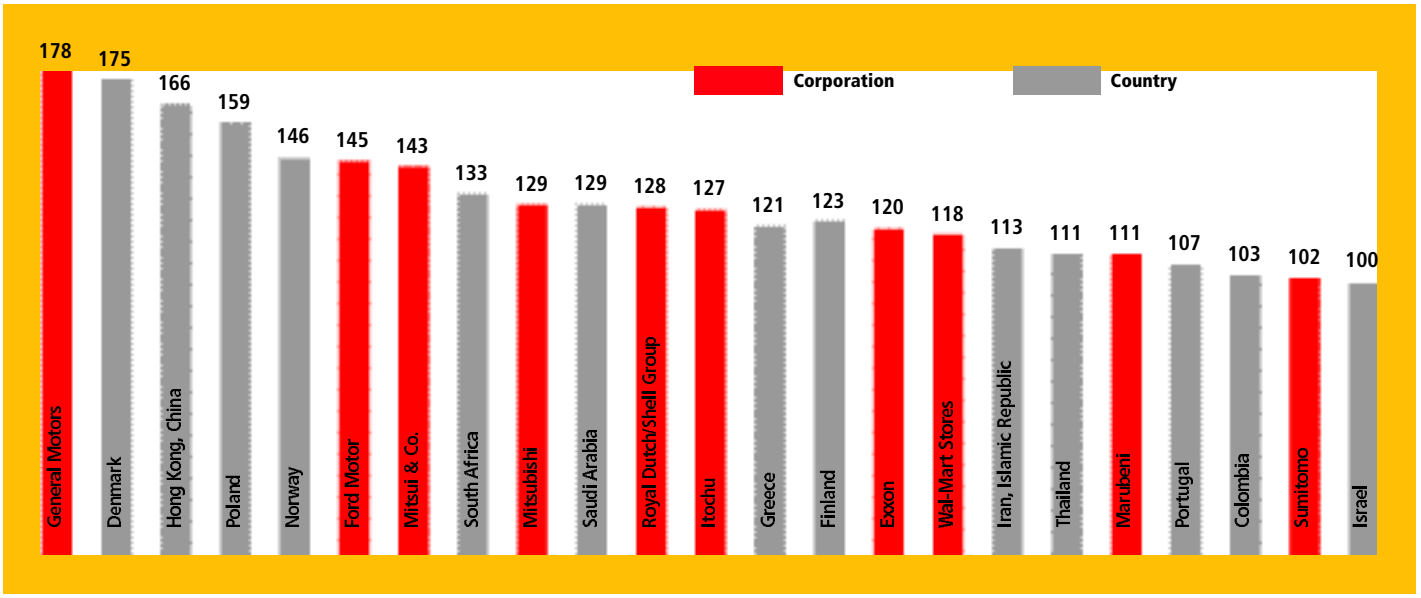
Source: Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy 1820-1992*, Paris, OECD, 1995

Stark disparities between rich and poor in global opportunity (1997 shares)



Source: *Human Development Office 1999*

The world's top corporations had sales totalling more than the GDP of many countries in 1998 - GDP or total sales (US$ billions)



Sources: Forbes Magazine, World Bank

2

Movers and shakers

Organic rebel

Jennifer Morrow

After dodging police in the streets, a young activist in the U.S. takes the battle against corporate forces onto firmer ground

© Andrea del Moral/fitreplanet@hotmail.com

"Eat your food. Children in Ethiopia are starving." It is a familiar refrain at the American dinner table to which scores of children have replied: "Send them my broccoli!" But to Andrea del Moral, now 22, the question sparked confusion. Why were children starving? "I still don't understand it," she admits, "it's not about not enough food in the world."

That she continues to pursue the question sets her apart from her peers. A native of wealthy Seattle, Washington, she has turned her back on lucrative job opportunities to consider the co-existence of prosperity and starvation.

But the solution remains elusive. Looking back on a year of hard-core activism that has included the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle and Washington, D.C., teach-ins and cross-country road-trips, del Moral says frustration and hard lessons from the world of global politics have forced her to re-evaluate how she can help bring down the corporate forces that she believes are undermining food security.

With close-cropped curls and baggy carpenter's pants, she describes her look as "a little bit punk," but she is no arrogant rebel. Del Moral is thoughtful, articulate, with an easy, sometimes self-deprecating laugh.

That a young woman who has never known hunger should make it her vocation comes as a surprise even to her own parents. But del Moral credits them for planting the seeds. Her father is a botany professor and her mother works for the U.S. government's Environmental Protection Agency. "I grew up with that ethic [of environmentalists]," she says, adding that "my family always encouraged me to make my own decisions."

But to the dismay of her parents, del Moral abandoned her studies at a Montreal university to pursue activism full-time. Surviving on money earned tutoring and taking on odd acting roles, she began her subversive education with a band of like-minded twenty-somethings in Montreal. While mounting street plays illustrating the nightmarish creations of genetic engineering gone wrong, the troupe began plastering mock-labels on genetically modified foods and holding demonstrations outside the city's supermarkets.

Like thousands of other activists around the world, it was on the World Wide Web that del Moral first heard the buzz about the WTO's November 1999 meeting in Seattle. "At first I didn't know what the WTO was," she admits. By tapping into dozens of "list-serves" and email discussion groups, del Moral soon began fluently using terms like "corporate seed supply" and "biopiracy."

Practice before preaching

She also deepened her knowledge of the Bretton-Woods institutions and their sister, the WTO. She now realizes that "these institutions were not formed by people saying 'let's control the world'. They were created with good intentions that went wrong." For del Moral, "The big organizations are power structures that are in complete contradiction with direct democracy, which has the most potential for freedom." While she understands the need for international bodies to regulate and harmonize the laws of different countries, del Moral fears that these organizations are more concerned with profits than with people, and advocates dismantling them.

In the months prior to the Seattle protest, del Moral travelled across the country, attending demonstrations, workshops on civil disobedience and classes in Social Eco-

Freelance journalist based in New York City

logy, the philosophy of living by nature's example in which organic farming is central. She soon discovered her knack for addressing crowds. But after speaking to more and more people, she began to realize the limitations of her theories. She recalls meeting with a farmer in western Canada, who agreed that big corporations like Nabisco were manipulating the price of his harvest for their profits, but didn't see how organic farming would solve his financial problems. "For him it was about profits not production. We thought about how we could help, but we are just city kids," says del Moral, "I have no place telling these kinds of people I have the solutions."

Disappointed by that encounter, del Moral decided to learn to practice what she was preaching in the context of the global economy. She figured the best place to get the big picture was in Seattle.

Del Moral arrived in her hometown on the eve of Thanksgiving—ironically the American harvest holiday associated with over-eating. No one anticipated the extent of the violence that erupted in Seattle from November 30 to December 3. Television images beamed around the world showed a devastated city in a state of emergency; riot police in bulletproof armour beating back protestors, armed National Guardsmen roaming the streets and graffiti-ed storefronts.

As WTO delegates arrived, security was bolstered. Stepping into the streets she had roamed as a child, del Moral felt the ground shift. Her first encounter with riot police in a parking garage marked a moment of truth: she and her friends, armed only with big ideas, were about to engage in a battle with far more powerful forces. "At that moment" says del Moral, "I realized a sort of war was being waged upon us and this (the police) was its visible manifestation… I wish I could carry that realization around with me every day."

While she steered clear of the front lines to avoid arrest, sleepless nights and days spent dodging the police left her battle-weary. Once again, del Moral wondered if she was making the best use of her energy. "We will never take down industrial agriculture," she recalls asking herself, "so why are we doing this?"

Committed to change but still searching for her place in the anti-globalization movement, del Moral has retreated from the front lines, devoting herself to organic farming. On a six-acre farm in the quiet hills of Vermont, she earns $50 a week tilling the land, and experimenting with seed saving and ancient farming techniques which she believes still hold the key to solving world hunger. ■

After the Cold War, the fourth world war has started.

Sub-Commandante Marcos, head of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, after the Seattle protests

Igorots: in defence of home

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

In the mid-1970s, the Igorot people won fame for fighting the largely World Bank-funded Chico River Dam project. Now, their survival is increasingly linked to changing the rules of international trade, as a leading advocate explains

I had become a student activist after living in Manila at the height of the anti-Vietnam War movement, but I was firmly convinced that my future lay in going back home to help organize my native people, the Igorots[1]. Since martial law had been declared in 1972, the only legitimate way for us to operate was through NGOs. Six years later I created one to organize villagers and set up community-based health programmes.

We raised the social and political awareness of our people, and mobilized them against the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. We understood that we were oppressed and discriminated against as indigenous people, and that therefore we should struggle for self-determination and regional autonomy. In the 1980s, the government was finally forced to cancel the Chico River Dam Project because of our sustained opposition. This project would have displaced around 300,000 Igorots.

At the time we could already see the value of international networking to gather support for our struggles against military rule in many of our communities. We discovered the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and used it to strengthen our cause.

Indigenous peoples also became active in lobbying the United Nations to address human rights ▶

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (left), with Guatemalan activist

© Tebtebba, Philippines

Executive director of the Manila-based Tebtebba Foundation (tebtebba@skyinet.net), the Indigenous People's Centre for Policy Research and Education, set up in 1996 to promote the cause of indigenous peoples and investigate the effects of globalization on their livelihoods.

1. The Igorots are indigenous people from six ethno-linguistic tribes—the Ibaloy, Kankana-ey, Ifugao, Kalinga, Apayao/Isneg and the Bontoc—living in the rugged Cordillera region in the northern Philippines. All six tribes share common traits, including religious beliefs based on nature. The total population of Igorots in the region stands at 1.2 million according to the 1995 census.

violations of indigenous peoples. Since the creation in 1982 of a UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, indigenous peoples have regularly taken part in drafting minimum standards for the protection of their rights. I am, however, a strong believer in the primacy of local and national struggles over international action. Without strong resistance on the ground, international campaigns will fail. The fall of the Marcos dictatorship came about primarily because of the protests of the poor majority, which had built up for more than 20 years within the country. Only once the regime became widely unpopular did the elite Filipinos and the international community start to withdraw some support from it.

But I have also seen how decisions or agreements reached by international institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can erode gains achieved locally. From the late 1970s to the 1980s, I helped to set up community-based health programmes, only to see the structural adjustment policies and programmes of the World Bank and IMF lead to budget cuts in health, while liberalization of our investment and trade laws set back much of our progress.

The struggle for ancestral land rights, for instance, was undermined by the Mining Act of 1995, which allows foreign mining corporations to have 100 per cent foreign equity and a 75-year lease on a maximum of 81,000 hectares of mineral lands. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA), a new law passed in 1998, rectified some of the damage but falls short of what we want. The mining corporations have nevertheless filed a suit in the Supreme Court questioning its constitutionality.

We were told that to develop, we have to shift from producing for our domestic use to producing for the world market. But those who shifted to cash crop production are now going bankrupt because of the dumping of highly-subsidized, imported agricultural products from foreign countries. Cheap ready-to-fry sliced potatoes, corn, oranges and pears, frozen-dressed chicken and other foods are being dumped in the country, destroying the livelihoods of tens of thousands of farmers. The commitments of the Philippine government, particularly relating to agriculture as part of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, has allowed this to happen.

This situation is not unique to the Philippines. Our Quechua sisters from Peru share a similar story. Their potatoes are now left to rot in the fields because they cannot compete with cheap, dumped processed potato slices from North America. Imported maize or corn has also destroyed the traditional corn production of indigenous peoples in Mexico. Food insecurity and the loss of livelihoods are worsening each day.

Of course, we argue that our governments should be blamed because they signed these agreements, and also because they push an unsustainable economic model that is debt-driven, export-oriented and import-dependent.

In our own voice

But we are not blind to the powers of the World Trade Organization, the IMF and World Bank, and bodies like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) or the Group of Eight. Those economies that do not fall in line become pariahs. The globalization of the production and consumption systems of the few elite countries, corporations and individuals is a threat to the continued existence of diverse and sustainable indigenous livelihoods.

This is the main reason why Tebtebba was set up in 1996. After doing work on the local and national levels, I felt that there was a gap. Global decisions directly impact on our daily lives and can erode gains achieved through years of hard work. Yet we have no chance to influence these decisions. Our absence in the global arena allows others to speak for us, and in many instances we are misrepresented. Tebtebba is a Kankana-ey-Igorot term for discourse and I thought this was an appropriate name for an Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education.

Indigenous peoples are pushing hard for the UN to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and are campaigning to slow down or halt unfettered globalization. Tebtebba took the lead in researching and writing on globalization and indigenous peoples. In Seattle, we adopted the "Seattle Declaration of Indigenous Peoples." Among other things, this called for the removal from the WTO of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights—a legal device allowing corporations to appropriate our diverse biological and genetic resources, along with our traditional knowledge, and to patent life itself.

We still have a long way to go. We need all kinds of partnerships, even with governments, to bring about a world which allows us to exist as distinct peoples and where social, economic and environmental justice reigns. ■

Key indicators

Population (millions, 1998): **72.9**

GNP ($ billions): **78.9**

GNP per capita ($): **1,050**

Population below income poverty line of $1 a day (%): **18.7**

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2000

Ecuador: beyond the dollar coup

Marcos Almeida

Globalization is fine, say Ecuador's indigenous leaders, as long as it allows us to preserve our traditional culture and begin talks with the North on a level playing field

© Silvia Izquierdo/AP/Boomerang, Paris

Brandishing the Ecuadorian flag, indigenous protestors march in a bid to save their currency.

Luis Macas is one of the most prominent leaders and thinkers in Ecuador's indigenous people's movement. Invariably dressed in the distinctively dark poncho and sombrero from his village of Saraguro, in the country's western highlands, he manages the Internet edition of a newsletter published by the Institute for the Knowledge of Indigenous Culture. Macas heads this Quito-based body, having served stints as president of the Confederation of Ecuador's Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE) and as a national deputy for the Pachakutik movement.

The CONAIE and its political wing Pachakutik, which today has six deputies in the 123-seat unicameral Ecuadorian parliament, was one of the main groups involved in a popular uprising in January 2000 that shocked the world by seizing control of the government and parliament in Quito. Allied with a group of young military officers rebelling against corruption, the indigenous groups forced the then President Jamil Mahuad to resign and flee the country, though the insurgents failed to secure one of their main objectives: stopping a bid to dollarize the economy, which wiped out the national currency, the sucre, with the stroke of a pen.

Niches of local power

For Luis Macas, a restored sense of identity is not only important for indigenous people, who make up a third of the country's 12 million people, but for Ecuadorian society as a whole. Once indigenous people complete their period of "self-definition" through struggles for land and preservation of their ancestral culture, Macas argues, "ethnic differences can be superseded" and political plans drafted for the whole society.

Macas places great hope in the niches of local power won by Ecuador's indigenous movement in May 2000, when they romped to victory in 27 town halls and five provincial districts out of 22—a totally unparalleled event in recent Latin American history.

According to Macas, success at the ballot box needs to be converted into better training for local indigenous leaders and greater democratic participation by communities: "there are two bases, the technical and the political, and we have to strengthen both," he declares.

One person who appears to carry off both technical ▶

Ecuadorian journalist

and political roles with ineffable skill is Mariano Curicama. Mayor of the Guamote district in the province of Chimborazo, which houses over 133 indigenous communities, Curicama combines a long career as leader of his people's campaigns with an extraordinary managerial dynamism. "You'll never find me inside my office," he explains, "I'm always on the road." Re-elected twice since 1992, this Quechua from the country's central highlands who started work as a builder at the age of 17, has revolutionized his district, promoting public participation in local assemblies, and combining the *minga*—the Quechua people's traditional community work—with assistance from leading foreign organizations. The results are there for all to see: roads, drinking water, irrigation channels, reforestation and replenishment of the local fish stock in places where previous governments sowed only poverty and patronage. A few months ago he created the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, which local people hope will advertise and sell their products within the country and abroad. Mariano Curicama, who has travelled to 14 countries, is not afraid of globalization: "If we don't jump on this car, we'll be left by the side of the road," he declares.

"If we don't jump on this car, we'll be left by the side of the road."

Miguel Lluco, a former national deputy and national co-ordinator of the Pachakutik movement, is also convinced that his people's horizons will have to widen: "Ecuador can't be an exception in this process of globalization," he says. The bloodless uprising in January, he acknowledges, was "the inevitable reflection of a global situation that has been imposed on us through dollarization and the globalization of currency exchanges, and which threatens to disrupt the development of our own political agenda.

"That's why it's so vital to build up links with people who are campaigning and proposing alternatives across the world. If we had stayed put in Ecuador with the local land conflicts of the 1960s, when every village fought with its own landlord as if it were engaged in a private battle, we would never have made all this progress in indigenous people's organization. People in the First World can provide us with a lot, while we can promote our values and community vision."

Until the age of 13, when on one moonlit night he left the rustic house where he lived with his illiterate peasant family and headed to the sugar cane plantations on the coast, Miguel Lluco knew nothing outside his small corner of the Andes. On the basis of his experience as a labourer, shoeshine boy, ice-cream salesman, carpenter, union leader, politician, deputy, and indefatigable defender of the "integral human being," as he likes to put it, Lluco weighs up the risks and opportunities of a globalized world: "I see it in the same way as the course of my life, from my village of Sacaguan, to discovering the neighbouring town of Guamote and its school, then on to the situation of Ecuador and Latin America as a whole, until I started to wonder 'What do they think in the First World?,' 'How do we build a form of communication and perhaps co-operation?'"

The future of the first Latin American country to abandon its own currency hinges on the answers that Ecuador and the North give to these questions. ■

Key indicators

Population (millions, 1998): **12.2**

GNP ($ billions): **18.4**

GNP per capita ($): **1,520**

Population below income poverty line of $1 a day (%): **20.2**

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2000

Banana blues

Crépin Hilaire Dadjo

A farmers' group in Burkina Faso gains clout in its battle against the liberalization of agriculture, and turns to the global movement for support

Ousséini Ouédraogo, forty-something, looks like a lumberjack. He has the moral strength of one, too. Ouédraogo coordinates the programmes of the National Federation of Farmers' Organizations (FENOP), a group that was set up in 1996 and boasts 197 unions, 500 grassroots associations and some 400,000 members in every corner of Burkina Faso.

Ouédraogo, an agronomist who descends from Princess Yennenga—the ancestor of the Mossé, Burkina Faso's main ethnic group—is fighting for the farmers in his country, where nearly 80 per cent of the population lives off the land. Almost non-existent farm mechanization, illiteracy and low yields mean they are barely able to eke out an existence. And yet, the country owes them everything. Cotton, Burkina Faso's primary source of foreign currency, accounted for two-thirds of export earnings in 1998, or over 1.2 billion French francs ($171.4 million). Breeding accounted for 15 per cent of exports ($38.5 million) the same year.

"For us, farmers are full-fledged citizens," says Ouédraogo. "They are entitled to respect. We are working to improve their status and to defend their interests. We're always there wherever and whenever one of our members needs us." The FENOP fought its first battle against an "internal enemy." In 1997, the organization clashed with the Textile Fibre Company (SOFITEX), which rules the cotton industry and has a monopoly on input and sales. Cotton was in crisis. A black veil covered the "white gold." Cotton fields were overrun by caterpillars, and the pesticides supplied by a SOFITEX subsidiary were ineffective. Some farmers left the country, others committed suicide. Growers who went into debt up to their necks at the start of each agricultural season felt as if they had a knife to their throats.

Journalist with the Jade agency in Burkina Faso

© Jorgen Schytte/Still Pictures, London

The country's "white gold" has plunged many farmers into debt.

If globalization is not always a choice, it should at least be accepted by those it involves. Today, the dose imposed on Africa is undoubtedly too strong. If globalization does not translate into equality for all, it should even less be the domination of the strongest over the weakest.

Gertrude Mongella, former member of the Tanzanian parliament and secretary general of the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference

Appealing to popular opinion, Ouédraogo and his organization asked a private newspaper, *Le Pays*, to see for itself. SOFITEX counter-attacked by staging a propaganda tour of a cotton-growing region for other newspapers. That is when the FENOP received unexpected support from *L'Indépendant*, directed by the famous investigative journalist Norbert Zongo, who was assassinated on December 13, 1998. Protests swelled and the government had to calm things down: it wiped out all the debts that farmers had contracted to purchase the pesticides. This was the first time in any farmer's living memory that the State backed down in the face of angry protests.

The FENOP is proud of that victory, but it had to keep on fighting, this time on the broader front of farm industry liberalization. In the 1980s, structural adjustment policies had dealt severe blows to farm aid such as subsidized fertilizers and training. Moreover, lower import duties helped to increase competition between national and foreign products on the domestic market. Intergovernmental accords signed in January 2000 in the framework of West Africa's regional integration policy only furthered the trend towards lower customs barriers. And, as usual, nobody asked small farmers what they thought.

In this context, the FENOP started two battles, one against bananas from Côte d'Ivoire, the other against rice from Asia, both symbols of trade liberalization. But the struggle against bananas from Côte d'Ivoire seems futile. Even though they do not taste as good as Burkina Faso's smaller fruit, they look better and cost less. Grown on large, modern plantations, they also benefit from better agricultural conditions and a more clement climate.

The battle against Asian rice, which is gradually replacing local grains, seems off to a better start but depends on untangling a web of corruption. "We have conducted an investigation," says Ouédraogo, "to show that a ton of that rice costs 25 per cent less on the market at Ouagadougou than it would if the importers paid all the duties." He adds that Burkina Faso's rice "is of better quality because it comes from recent harvests, while the imported rice is sometimes seven to 10 years old. And there is not a shadow of a doubt that chemical preservatives had to be added to keep it from spoiling. But many consumers are unaware of all that."

Winning market shares without selling out

According to its leaders, the FENOP is fighting so that producers are no longer left out of the global economy and can win positions on future markets. The group goes out into the field to inform and train farmers, while producing films for national television about promising crops, such as oil seeds, shea and sesame. For example, few farmers know that sesame brought in some $4.2 million two years ago. That tidy sum was harvested because of the quality of Burkina Faso's crop, grown without fertilizers (because farmers cannot afford them) at a time when organic products are becoming increasingly popular in Europe and Asia.

So opening up borders sometimes has positive effects. But Burkina Faso's farmers must be careful not to sell their souls to the devil. "That is also what we defend. A kind of citizenship agriculture," says Ouédraogo. "Like José Bové in France. In September 1999, we even adopted a motion of support for the imprisoned French farmer." Faced with a government that is seeking to divide and denigrate the farmers' movement, the FENOP knows it needs allies. At the beginning of July 2000, the group helped to set up a regional organization of West African farmers' movements and maintains contacts with Via Campesina, a worldwide movement to support farmers' cultures and struggles. The Sahel and McDonald's may not be at war yet, but farmers' organizations are gearing up for the fray. ■

Key indicators

Population (millions, 1998): **11.3**

GNP ($ billions): **2.6**

GNP per capita ($): **240**

Population below income poverty line of $1 a day (%): **61.2**

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2000.

The fishermen's firebrand takes on the fleets

Father Thomas Kocherry has been catapulted into leading India's 10-million-strong fishing community in its campaign against industrial fleets, shrimp farms and coastal pollution

© Ron Gilling/Still Pictures, London

A small Indian port threatened by industrial fishing.

"The life of the planet and the dependent health and welfare of humanity must not be sacrificed to the greed of the few," declared Father Thomas Kocherry last year on being awarded the Sophie's Prize, created by Norwegian novelist Jostein Gaardner, for his environmental work. Famed for his powerful oratory, this Catholic priest helped to create the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers in 1997, of which he is now a co-ordinator.

The last ten years have been marked by a series of protests by fisherpeople across India, in which you have been deeply involved. Why are fishing communities so angry?

In 1991 India introduced its new economic policy, which marked the beginning of a new deep sea fishing policy. Huge foreign vessels, working under the guise of joint ventures and fees paid to the government, were given licenses and started coming into Indian waters. There are some 25,000 such vessels around the world. They have depleted all the oceans apart from the Indian Ocean, and are a threat to over 100 million people in developing countries who depend on fisheries for their livelihood. So this new policy was clearly going to affect Indian fisherpeople, and probably displace them. Ten million fisherpeople went on four all-India strikes. The government appointed the Murari committee, which made 21 recommendations aimed at changing the entire deep sea fishing policy. These were accepted by the Cabinet, and since 1996, the government has stopped giving new licenses. For probably the first time, a fishing community changed the policy of globalization through protest.

Your movement has also expressed particular concern over shrimp production for export.

First of all, you have to ask why aquacultures [shrimp farms] exist. It's because a particular variety like shrimp, cuttle fish or salmon is already depleted, and is no longer available in the marine sector. But the very fact that it is a monoculture means trouble, because it depends on a high use of pesticides and artificial manure. This pollutes the entire area. Then the paddy-fields, which are meant for the people's basic needs, are converted. Then the mangroves are destroyed, though they are the breeding ground for many species. By bringing in saline water, you pollute the drinking water meant for local people. The entire development [around 200,000 hectares of coastal land have been converted into shrimp farms] is displacing coastal people and fishing communities. And all this intensive aquaculture of shrimps is controlled by big companies, big investors and big rich people—and funded by the World Bank. It is a philosophy of rape and run: you make the money fast, then you run away.

In 1996, the Supreme Court ordered all the aquaculture farms in the country to be abolished. But instead of abolishing them, the government and political parties sided with the World Bank and multinational companies, and ordered a review of the judgement. They then introduced a new Aquaculture Authority bill, which is pending approval by the Upper House of Parliament. Fisherpeople are very angry about this.

How has the experience of Indian fishermen differed from that of other fishing communities around the world?

Whether in India, the U.S. or Europe, small boats and small communities have no chance of survival. Everywhere the pattern is the same: only the big will survive, and the rest will be wiped out.

But globalization's victims can change the situation. From Senegal to Brazil, from Canada to South Africa, fisherpeople are struggling against destructive fishing and the stronghold of multinationals. Local communities should be the custodians of this natural capital. ■

Interview by Ivan Briscoe, *Unesco Courier* journalist

Key indicators

Population (millions, 1998): **982.2**

GNP ($ billions): **427.4**

GNP per capita ($): **440**

Population below income poverty line of $1 a day (%): **44.2**

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2000

Justice for Janitors in Silicon Valley

Victoria Elliott

By exposing the flagrant gap between rich and poor, janitors in America's high-tech heartland have captured nationwide attention in their fight for decent working conditions

Vicente Mendoza, an immigrant from Mexico, travels about 15 miles (24 km) through the rush hour traffic each morning from Oakland, California, to his first job in San Ramon, where he shows up to work in a restaurant at 9 a.m. After five hours of work, he stops home again for a couple of hours, then crosses the San Mateo Bridge over the San Francisco bay and heads for the offices of Advanced Micro Devices, 26 miles (40 km) away in Sunnyvale. Here, he works as a janitor for his second shift of the day, from 6 p.m. to 2.30 a.m. The office workers are gone; only a few late night stragglers see him push his cart around, loaded with cleaning fluid and mops. By the time he gets home again, it's 3:15 a.m.

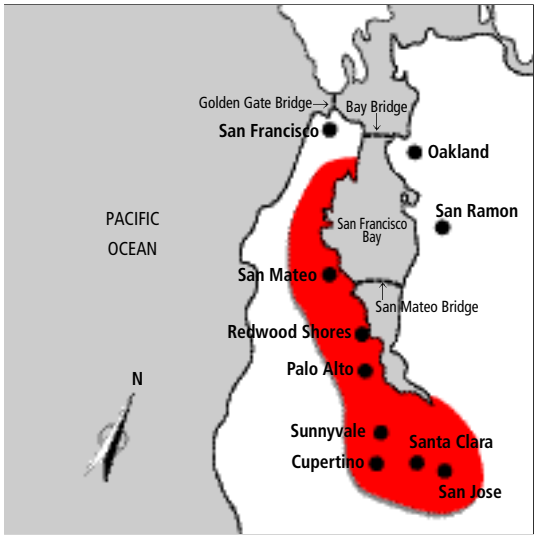
It's surprising he had any energy left over to march, but this spring Mendoza was one of the 5,500 janitors in Service Employees International Union, Local 1877, who came out with the Justice for Janitors movement to rally in Sunnyvale for decent working conditions and better wages. They wore red T-shirts to make the point that invisible as they are, working out of the public view, they were determined to be seen.

Tenuous contracts

In this they succeeded. Low-paid workers in a high-tech economy, they managed to capture attention nationwide as cast-offs of the unprecedented growth in Silicon Valley. Working relentlessly to try to make ends meet, they have been left behind by an industry that has grown faster and produced more wealth than any other in the history of the world.

At the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in December, there was little talk of this volatile nexus of the world economy. And yet, according to one of the Seattle protesters, Raj Jayadev—a young Bay Area activist who grew up in San Jose as the son of Indian immigrants—Silicon Valley brings together the key issues raised by globalization.

"The labour struggle, the environmental degradation, the inequities, the falling standards of living, the importance of immigration — it's all played out on the shop floors of Santa Clara County," he says. Jayadev describes how he worked on the assembly line at Hewlett Packard, lifting boxes with an electrical engineer from the Punjab, an Eritrean with a degree in finance and a plant owner from Kerala, India, all of whom were acutely conscious of their drop in status.



While some circuit board assembly lines have since been exported abroad, to Taiwan, Korea, India and East Germany, janitors need not worry that their employers will pull out and move elsewhere. The gleaming office buildings in Cupertino and on the man-made lake at Redwood Shores are not going away.

But the janitors have also been caught in the characteristic bind of the new economy. Conditions of employment in California have grown increasingly tenuous as the new economy goes from strength to strength. According to Working Partnerships, a labour think-tank based in San Jose, 45 per cent of Californians now have no more than two years' tenure in their current jobs, and temporary employment agencies between 1993 and 1998 expanded by 182,900 people — more than the net job growth in the software and electronic industries combined. The trend toward outsourcing, as businesses pare down extraneous employees to concentrate on their core business, has been felt throughout the workforce.

Fourteen years earlier, workers like Mendoza would have been in-house employees earning as much as $14 an hour at such firms as Hewlett Packard. But in the economic slump of the early 1990s, the high-tech firms reaped a bonus, spinning off janitorial work, along with such services as landscaping and security, to competing independent contractors and substantially bringing down the cost of janitors' labour, to around $8 an hour. ▶

Some will always be above others. Destroy the inequality today, and it will appear again tomorrow.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, U.S. poet and essayist (1803-1882)

Editor at the San Francisco Chronicle

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On strike: in Los Angeles, a member of the janitor's union marches for better pay.

The Silicon Valley giants in turn argued that they had no responsibility for the workers that the sub-contractors brought in to sweep their marble halls. Janitors' leaders, however, have not hesitated to exploit their position as a symbol of the vast disparities of wealth in the area. "It was a larger question that brought so much attention: What are we going to do with our poor in today's booming economy?" says Mike Garcia, the president of the local janitors' union. "These people were working two to three jobs and trying to raise a family. Meanwhile, they're cleaning the edifices of the filthy rich, the overnight billionaires and millionaires. How could they explain that their janitors are living two to three families in a garage?"

Tom Csekey, the union's vice president, has spent the last decade with Garcia building up union representation among janitors in the Bay Area from about 25 per cent of the janitorial workforce to more than 75 per cent this year. In 1996, they were able to get a living wage ordinance passed in Los Angeles; the union's recent struggles have centred on immigration issues and health insurance. "We devised a strategy where we were able to talk not so much about wages as about the conditions the workers live in," says Csekey. "The backdrop was going to the clients and saying: 'These people work within your walls. You've got some level of responsibility here.'"

And finally, faced with a chorus of protest from other unions, Catholic bishops and local politicians, executives at the biotech firm Genentech and the telecommunications company Pacific Bell were shamed into admitting responsibility for workers they had refused to acknowledge.

The contract the janitors settled in June, without going on strike, was the most generous in the history of the union. It provides for an eight per cent annual increase in their hourly pay over the next three years, from $7.64 or $8.04, depending on which county they work in, to $9.64 or $10.04. But that is hardly going to help them move out of the converted garages they live in, where a small two-bedroom house can fetch $750,000.

After prevailing both in the Bay Area and in Los Angeles, the union is now concentrating on the janitors of Sacramento. The expiration of the contracts it has just negotiated has been synchronized, so that in three years, 14,000 janitors across California will be acting in concert.

The dispossessed

Much of the workforce of Silicon Valley is as yet unorganized, from the crews at Internet start-ups who work 14-hour days and camp out in their offices to the lower echelons. In the almost entirely non-unionized "clean rooms" that assemble circuits, Asian workers are often wary of joining a union, sometimes because their immigration status is uncertain.

But among the ranks of the janitors, many of whom are also undocumented, the Mexican tradition of organizing is strong. "They understand the concept of unionization," says Garcia. "They're not confused at all that our powers lie in our ability to come together."

Garcia is anxious to make common cause with the increasingly dispossessed middle classes. The strike, he feels, has helped to turn around the climate of xenophobia that swept through California over proposed anti-immigrant legislation. "People look at immigrants in a much more positive vein today," he says, "as hard-working people trying to advance themselves."

Marianne Steeg, staff director of the South Bay Labor Council, argues that the janitors' strike helped to draw attention to questions of the area's social contract, putting the need for affordable housing, transportation and health care firmly at the top of the political agenda.

"School teachers, firemen, health workers — so many of our workers who can no longer afford to live here —no longer identify with the upper-middle class, but with the working poor," she says, adding that the strike put a dent in the shining armour of the high-tech firms. "They can no longer claim that the prosperity of Silicon Valley means prosperity for all." ■

Key indicators

Population (millions, 1998): **274**

GNP ($ billions): **7.903**

GNP per capita ($): **29,240**

Population below income poverty line of $14.40 a day, the norm for industrialized countries (%): **14.1**

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2000

Connected and capable

Pierre Calame

First, civil society acted as an opposition force, then it brought a critical voice into major world forums. Now the time has come to offer alternatives

We have often observed that the world has become smaller with the development of rapid communication and transportation. In fact, however, the world has become larger as millions of people left out of the mainstream of civilization for centuries have crowded their way into modern society.

Martin Luther King Jr, American religious leader and civil rights activist (1929-1968)

It all starts with a sense of powerlessness, springing from a paradox that can be formulated in many different ways but which boils down to a simple truth: humanity will have to make some pretty fundamental changes if it wants to survive. We clearly cannot rely on the main political and economic players—imprisoned in their agendas, hampered by short-sightedness and practical constraints—to take up the challenge. Instead, it's up to the ordinary citizens to organize on a global scale, and change from being powerless to taking a stand, joining the debate and drafting a different way forward.

The Charles Léopold Mayer[1] Foundation for Human Progress was set up in 1982 in Geneva with the aim of linking activism in the world to study of the future. At the time, our societies, though richer and wiser than ever before, seemed singularly unable to satisfy the hopes and most basic needs of their members. We had to weave a closer relationship between thought and action, between advances in knowledge and possibilities for human progress.

It's up to the ordinary citizens to organize on a global scale, and change from being powerless to taking a stand.

The foundation started out by supporting endeavours that brought these elements together—a novelty at the time—but these initiatives still remained isolated "projects." For example, one project in Brazil involved assistance in building a network across 10 regions to gather information on traditional branches of knowledge and contrast the findings with modern science. In Tanzania, a project aimed to improve agricultural training by making it more attuned to small farmers' needs.

While involved in these projects, we made two discoveries. Firstly, we found that solutions to problems must be made on the basis of each particular social context, though the problems themselves are broadly the same. A common denominator of issues cropped up in all the projects, no matter where they were taking place. But these shared characteristics were often hidden by the sheer complexity of local circumstances, rigid mindsets, institutional factors and different schools of knowledge.

This common denominator became the very basis of our programmes, and explains the importance we have attached to establishing networks. Equipping some of our partners with Internet, a potentially formidable tool for democratic progress, has thus become one of the foundation's priorities.

Our second discovery was that the most useful knowledge for future action comes from practice, namely from one's own experience and that of others – experience that must be identified and recorded so others can learn from it. Hence the need to store information and circulate it by creating a tool for communication that can become a type of "collective intelligence." Since 1986, the foundation has gradually built up an international database for sharing experience, establishing first of all norms for organizing and distributing the information. Today, this corpus of shared experience covers a wide area, from the geopolitics of drugs and social exclusion in Asia to the management of difficult neighbourhoods in northern France and innovative educational methods in Brazil. Some 8,000 contributions from citizens and local, regional and national institutions, research centres and NGOs are gathered in the database, while the Association of Chinese Mayors has expressed interest in adopting it for future use.

By enabling some of our network's members to become more knowledgeable than recognized experts in the field, these tools are among the key elements that will help take "civil society" into its third historical phase. A first period of protest was followed by participation in major world forums, to which we brought a critical voice. Now we are gearing up for a new era of initiative by connecting the alternative strategies and visions that people around the world are searching for, weighing up and inventing. All these alternatives are based on the simple premise: think locally, act globally.

This new unity, built over time and striving to realize a common goal through respect for the particularities of every place, is the essence of the Alliance for a Responsible and United World. Set up in 1993, it has partners in 115 countries, and made its most recent project a bid to "encourage the definition and practical application of a form of 'world governance' that meets the challenges of the 21st century." ■

Director of the Foundation for Human Progress (FPH)

1. Charles Léopold Mayer (1881-1971) was a philosopher, chemist, philanthropist and long-term investor. The foundation's budget is exclusively financed by revenue from his wealth, to the tune of approximately $8 million a year.

The Foundation: http://www.fph.ch
The Alliance for a Responsible and United World:

Governance: time for a radical remake

Ivan Briscoe

Despite their vastly different agendas, NGOs stand united in their plea for stemming the power of transnational corporations through more plural global structures

"Why, then the world's mine oyster, Which I with sword will open."

The Merry Wives of Windsor, William Shakespeare, English dramatist and poet (1564-1616)

As protest movements go, the mass gatherings that shouted down trade representatives and finance officials over the past year in Seattle, Washington and Bangkok bore few of the hallmarks of traditional opposition. There was no formal hierarchy to speak of, no single nationality, no clear shared cause. In the eyes of one pro-business group, the new genre of activism mimicked a political "swarm."

Yet though the diversity of the groups—from northern steel unions to disappearing tribes—seemed to many critics like rank incoherence, the movement's leaders stress that this very variety stands at the heart of their political project. In place of the uniform spread of commercial values, derided by leading U.S. campaigner Lori Wallach as a "one size fits all philosophy," they plead for new distribution of power that is porous enough to allow room for other interests.

"There's been an invasion in inappropriate spaces by unaccountable, unalterable trade rules," declares Wallach, whose public profile has soared since helping to co-ordinate the Seattle protests as director of the Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. "A version of the rules has been imposed that has much more to do with corporate input than the input from public interest . . . That's the democracy deficit in the global economy."

How can the corporate bottom line be eclipsed with the least economic damage?

In the eyes of campaigners, the rapid, government-approved spread of the free market has stripped political debate of any interest in the virtues that found a good society or legitimate global order. But the questions remain: how can the corporate bottom line be eclipsed with the least economic damage? What reforms are needed, and where?

According to Walden Bello, executive director of the Bangkok-based Focus on the Global South, globalization must be rescued from its current "monolithic, uniform and universalistic character" that has seen transnational corporations account for a majority of the world's exports and global inequality more than double since 1960.

A chief culprit, he argues, is "the free market biases of the framework pushed by the trinity of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which are fundamentally antithetical to the sort of diverse world that is conducive to equity. It is vital to cut them down to size—make them just ordinary actors among a plural set of actors in the global economy."

But the problem, as many activists agree, is that there are scanty fora for these demands to be heard and acted upon. National governments are seen as weak in the face of global finance, or in the case of developing nations, hamstrung by the obligations of IMF-sponsored debt reduction programmes and foreign aid. Business itself has no wish to see its wings clipped, while international bodies—from the United Nations to the WTO's infamous "green room" trade talks, allegedly dominated by rich nations—appear saddled with undemocratic structures and practices. The only way out, campaigners argue, is a radical remake of governance.

In the short-term, the priorities are clear. For Wallach, the punch-drunk WTO must be swiftly levelled: "it's shrink or sink for the WTO," she says. "Many of our current environmental, labour and human rights agreements are illegal trade barriers under WTO rules." Besides a shrunken trade organization, activists also call for the world's two main lending bodies to be stripped of the power to prescribe standard austerity packages. In Bello's opinion, the IMF and World Bank need to be balanced by an array of other bodies including regional trading blocs like ASEAN, strong labour and environmental agencies, and an official body to represent developing countries. This would give "more space to take independent paths to development," he argues.

Over the longer term, the proposals become hazier. Essentially defensive in nature, few NGOs involved in the campaign against globalization have drawn up detailed blueprints for a new world power structure. The ideas that have been suggested tend to stress the need to reinforce global bodies so they can patrol the new breed of footloose corporations, while bringing the roots of power down to the local level, viewed as the most accountable level of democracy. Some groups, like the Penang-based Third World Network, advocates a

UNESCO Courier journalist

© Michel Granger, Paris - *acrylic painting*

"Stronghold."

whole arsenal of global governance: a more democratic United Nations to include civil society representatives, a code of ethics for worldwide businesses, and new global agencies for competition, investment and crime.

Of all levels of governance, the nation-state seems the least favoured by NGOs. Either as a result of the flawed development and environmental destruction forged by countries such as Brazil and India since World War II, or as a result of current political failures, few groups favour giving greater powers to national executives. Even Wallach is quick to stress that universal trade rules of a basic anti-tariff nature are essential.

In contrast, several activists in developing countries tout Europe, where the union's powers appear to coexist reasonably well with local and national decision-making, as an attractive model. But the "sovereignty mindset," warns Jan Aart Scholte, reader in International Studies at Britain's University of Warwick, remains strong: "people tend not yet to have the political imagination to think of governance beyond the state as a place where their interests can be served." In the case of proposed global environmental and labour protection rules, for instance, developing countries have already cried foul.

For some NGOs, however, neither global reform nor local powers are the key to greater equity and sustainable development. Instead, the mission is to educate, enlighten and convert, so that the driving force of corporate growth —the tastes of each global consumer— are restrained. "If the world lived like the Americans or Europeans," says Ngai Weng Chan, chairman of the Malaysian Nature Society, "we would be doomed." ■

NGOs: searching for solid ground

Candido Grzybowski

The role of NGOs should be to foster the emergence of a worldwide civil society, the first step towards making globalization a more democratic affair

NGOs were not born yesterday, but the rising number of conflicts that have reverberated in recent decades around a world globalized in the neo-liberal mould has led them to multiply and diversify into highly visible bodies.

Who are the main players in this process of globalization? Governments (politics) and the market (the economy) are the twin pillars supporting the productive systems and structures of modern societies. So who has the legitimate right to change them? The societies themselves, for they alone are made up of citizens grouped together as a people, a nation or a country. The right does not belong to governments, state structures, corporate executives or markets. This is why, as ▶

Sociologist, director of the Institute of Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

NGOs, our attention is directed at civil society itself.

At the global level, our basic task is to foster the emergence of a worldwide civil society as a precondition to calling for a new style of globalization: "world governance." Our mission is to encourage the re-founding of globalization along more democratic lines by taking part in public debate and promulgating the concept of world citizenship. The political stances we take and our lobbying activities, therefore, do not come out of the blue, but are efforts to transmit the main currents and aspirations of public opinion and make this opinion stronger and clearer.

The tripartite mirage

All NGO actions are based on a obvious priority, namely that of supporting social protests and public pressure during major negotiations taking place within the main circles of power. That is why the agreements we conclude and the alliances we forge are above all else aimed at organizations and movements arising from civil society. That is also why we build forums, coalitions and networks that straddle national borders. On the basis of our approach, we can think globally, set up links between the particular and the universal, swap experiences and keep ourselves regularly informed.

"Planetary perspectives."

Today, global power is monopolized by major multilateral organizations, and is fundamentally anti-democratic in its structure and workings. In their current form, these organizations' claims to embody democracy and universal citizenship ring hollow. In fact, their only possible claim to legitimacy is through the vote. But not all the national governments represented in international organizations have been elected by popular suffrage, and very few of them represent all the different social forces that go into making up their nations.

Does this mean that NGOs, which are supposed to embody civil society, should claim to represent these peoples? Does it mean that our goal should be to win a place at the heart of a future new world democratic order? Does it mean that we are fully entitled to a seat in some new tripartite structure—made up of government, companies and civil society—that some people are campaigning for? In my opinion, all of that is just a mirage; even worse, we risk losing sight of our most useful and most legitimate purpose if we embrace that vision.

Small players, big issues

NGOs are not out to conquer power or win elections, be they world,national or local bodies. We are not set up like political parties, even though our activities are public and seem highly politicized. We cannot even present ourselves as representatives of civil society because civil society has not entrusted us with any such mandate.

So what do we want? To reach out, mobilize, educate, get across messages, suggest, innovate,persuade and politically strengthen various groups in civil society and, more specifically, those excluded from the decision-making process. We want to give a voice to ideas, values,questions and proposals that involve social justice, a more equitable distribution of wealth, respect for the environment, the struggle against poverty and social exclusion.

Who are we? Small players, compared to the other pillars of civil society, such as trade unions and professional organizations,or bodies in the state or the market. But we are also—and this is something new—"big" players, because our mission and our field of action are not limited to a given society, national economy or single government. Our task is to form a bridge between the local and the global: in other words, to deal with what is universal, with what is common to all humanity. Human rights, social crises and environmental protection are global issues. We deal with them in specific situations, but our perspective is always planetary.

So where does our legitimacy lie? In the quality of the values,principles and ideals we defend. In the relevance and the importance of the issues we raise. In the inventiveness of the proposals we put forward. Our only source of legitimacy is our ability to develop ideas aimed at action—ideas that are up to the standards of public duty to which we aspire. ■

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SPORT MEDICINE: TO HEAL OR TO WIN?

Philippe Liotard

On the eve of the Sydney Olympic Games, sport medicine is faced with ethical dilemmas that stretch well beyond the domain of top-level competition

Advances in life sciences and biotechnology are stirring up a broad debate about ethics. Expert committees are being called upon to bring ethical codes in line with genetic research developments, assisted reproduction, prenatal screening and the prospects for human cloning.

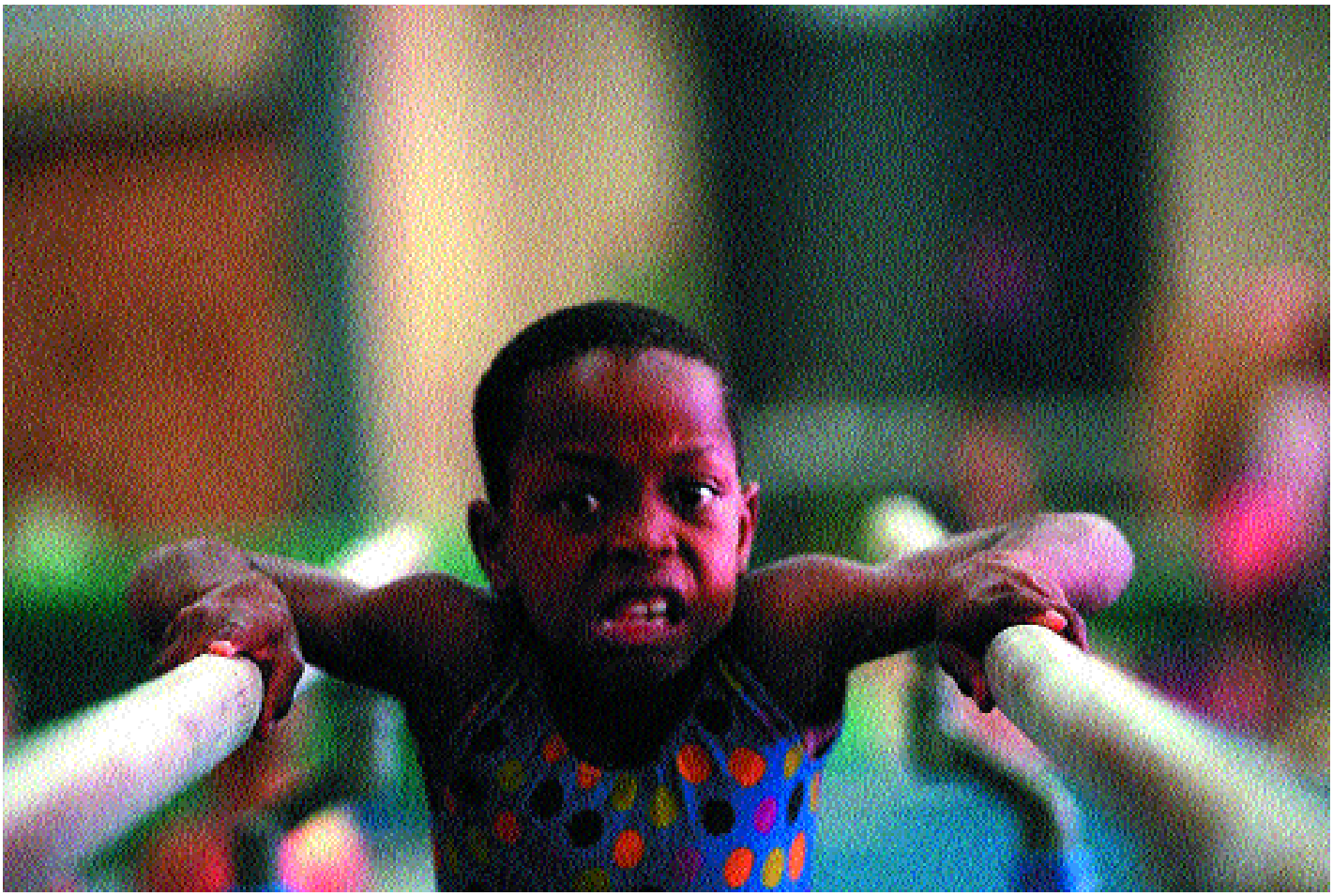
Standards for clinical reseach on humans,spelt out in the 1947 Nuremburg Rules, are now being challenged by medical advances and research unimaginable in those days. Questions surrounding the prospects of human embryo research (and the risks of new forms of eugenics) as well as research spurred by the mapping of the human genome, are generating new laws based on consultation with national and international ethics committees, along with medical and research groups. This is the most public part of the debate, the issues that make headlines.

But medical ethics involve far more than these issues, which are all essential to imagining the kind of "humanity" that we are embarking to create.Tomorrow's society is being assembled day by day in the privacy of doctors' surgeries. For medical ethics are also being challenged by patients themselves, and by practices that have become routine.

A premium on efficiency and performance

Doctors are inevitably affected by societal changes, shifting aspirations and accepted behavioural norms.They also have to try, in their relationship with patients, to reconcile ethical considerations with the new demands arising from a liberal society that puts high value on efficiency, output and performance. This is ▶

Professor at the Sports Faculty of the University of Montpellier (France), co-founder of *Quasimodo* magazine



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An all-out effort: coached by Russian gymnasts, the young South African Victor Mzimango gets ready to launch himself onto the parallel bars.

especially true in the case of drug-taking (or doping) in sport, which can be seen as the logical outcome of a performance-based type of medical practice. Oddly enough, discussion about doping is generally reduced to a few clichés: it is branded as unethical in light of an imaginary sporting ideal. Calls are made for better drug-testing and stiffer punishment for "cheats" and their accomplices. But this skates over the real issue—the pressures of competition in sport—and hides it even further from the public, doctors and authorities.

Doping in high-pressure sports can hardly be equated with reckless or rash behaviour. On the contrary, it requires the conscious involvement of the competitor who personally controls the state of his or her own body and training. The athlete is led to take drugs daily to reduce fatigue and to increase muscle power, or to recover quickly from an injury or excessive training, for example. The scandal over the Tour de France bicycle race in 1998 showed how riders knowingly and personally take banned substances in order to endure tough training and back-to-back races throughout a whole season.

So the real ethical debate rests solely on medical practice. It means we should reflect on how doctors respond to requests from athletes at all levels, for doping is also on the rise among amateurs and children.

The scandal over the Tour de France bicycle race in 1998 showed how riders knowingly and personally take banned substances in order to endure tough training and back-to-back races throughout a whole season.

At the 43rd American Health Congress, held in Washington in September 1996, Thomas H. Murray, of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland, Ohio), recounted how a mother asked for growth hormones for her son to improve his sporting performance. There are two factors behind this request. First, advances in medical biotechnology have made it possible to produce artificial hormones. Second, the drive to win draws the doctor into altering the body to make it perform better.

All medical codes of ethics condemn doctors acceding to such requests. The World Medical Association calls on every doctor to "oppose and refuse to administer or condone" methods that aim at "an unnatural increase or maintenance of performance during competition" or which "artificially change features appropriate to age and sex" (1981 Declaration on Principles of Health Care for Sport Medicine, amended in 1999).

Hormone boosts

But many doctors must still deal with the consequences of sporting activity. Physiologically, sport depletes a person's natural reserves, especially hormones. Intensive training for example, uses up the male hormone testosterone faster than the body replaces it. A doctor can put an athlete on supplements to make up for that loss, just as iron or vitamins are prescribed for people lacking them. So a deficiency in the body is made up for without any regard for what might have caused it in the first place—such as malnutrition, overwork or disease.

We do not yet have a separate branch of medicine dealing with performance. So far, it is just a few doctors straying from the original purposes of medicine. In the richest countries and among the elites in poor nations, such medicine is in demand as a medical prop to cope with the new emphasis placed on performance in all spheres of life. This is also very similar in principle to anti-ageing treatments, where health care is being adjusted to the fact that people are living longer. Hormone replacement therapy in elderly people is aimed at "improving the quality of life to match the extra number of years gained," according to Dr. Bruno Delignières, head of the endocrinology service at the Necker Hospital in Paris. Here too, hormonal adjustment is being prescribed because of progress in life sciences and patients' requests for drugs to alleviate the effects of ageing. The doctor is responding to a person's natural desire to improve their physical condition. Just like cosmetic surgery and treatments for impotence, which have been boosted by the invention of the drug Viagra, medicine is turning towards satisfying desires, spurred by images of well-being and youth. The pressure to get, maintain or preserve an "efficient" body and a "slim" figure is steadily increasing. The same goes for reducing pain during childbirth, old age and of course in everyday life, which

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The New York City marathon: a yearly event prized by executive types, among others.

includes sporting activity.

So one might think there is nothing wrong with prescribing drugs which improve the quality of an athlete's life, marked by intense physical activity. Fighting against stress, recovering from long-term fatigue, using anti-inflammatory drugs to reduce pain caused by intense exertion become normal given social expectations of chemically-assisted well-being.

But testosterone and related products, such as nandrolone, are classified as anabolic steroids and are the substances most frequently detected during drug testing. When taken in big doses, together with sufficient food and training, testosterone increases body mass, strength and muscle power as well as aggressivity and resistance to fatigue and pain. Corticoid drugs also reduce pain and help a person to tire less easily. So these substances are very suitable for easing the physical effects and psychological pressures of competitive sport.

The crucial issue lies in deciding where medical efforts to restore equilibrium end and efforts to improve performance begin. An artificial dividing line has been drawn. A scale has been devised to measure the quantity of "supplements." Medical tests can now detect if a person has taken "unreasonable" amounts of substances that are no longer banned, but tolerated up to a certain point.

The good health riddle

Medical ethics do not require a doctor to ask whether someone is "cheating" under the rules of sport. A doctor does not have to take a stand on demands made in fields other than his own. The problem is how to define the state of health that the doctor aims for, not the level of doping. The World Medical Association's Geneva Declaration (adopted in 1948 and amended in 1983) is clear: "The health of my patient will be my first consideration," a doctor is supposed to pledge. So it naturally condemns "procedures to mask pain or other protective symptoms if used to enable the athlete to take part in an event when lesions or signs are present which make his participation inadvisable."

Doctors (in sport or otherwise) who engage in these practices are not performing their duty towards patients (which involves prescribing a halt to painful activity) but are complying with the demands of sport. From an ethical standpoint, a desired performance must not be taken into account in the course of diagnosis or treatment. Medical ethics condemn any action dictated by interests or pressures not related to the goal of good health.

This is where the debate gets really tricky, because in modern parlance and in the language of doping in sport, good health is understood to mean the absence of illness or lasting after-effects. However, since 1940, the World Health Organization has defined good health as a combined state of physical, emotional and social well-being. The Centre for Health Promotion at the University of Toronto, points out that good health is not an end in itself but a means to a balanced life.

This makes good health a quest for well-being based on individual aspirations in a particular social and cultural context. Put this way, it becomes something extremely subjective and changeable according to the time and place as well as the sex, age and social class of the person involved. Each individual decides on the basis of his or her own life and cultural environment a relationship to well-being, pain and illness.

Sport medicine is a forerunner of the medicine of the future – a medicine at the behest of institutions in the business of boosting efficiency.

Sport presents doctors with a paradox. Most of them believe physical activity makes for a balanced life. But they are also well aware that competition upsets this balance, and that chemical-based treatments can be prescribed to supplement deficiencies. If they respond to such demands, they are only reinforcing the alienating emphasis put on performance at all costs, of which sport is just the most striking example.

Science at the altar of performance?

But doctors can still, without any qualms of conscience, refuse to play the game and deplore the effects of a hectic life-style imposed by the obligation to perform. Acting in the interest of patients' welfare involves teaching them how to pursue a balanced life. A doctor's duty is to tell patients why they are ill. If this can be done without problem where obesity and the dangers of smoking or drinking are concerned, the same goes where the dangerous effects of sport are involved.

Sport medicine is a forerunner of the medicine of the future—a medicine at the behest of institutions in the business of boosting efficiency. It runs the risk of ushering in a common norm dictating people's appearance (through cosmetic surgery), character (through prenatal diagnosis) and social behaviour, namely through the demand for performance in all fields, be it professional, sexual or sporting. ■

ETHICS: THE TABLETS OF STONE

The Hippocratic Oath

"I swear by Apollo the Physician, and Aesculapius, and health, and all-heal, and all the Gods and Goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this oath and stipulation:
(...) I will follow that method of treatment which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel. (...) Into whatever houses I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick and will abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption. (...) While I continue to keep this oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all men at all times, but should I trespass and violate this oath may the reverse be my lot."

The Olympic Charter, inspired by Pierre de Coubertin, responsible for reviving the Olympic Games in 1896

"Olympism is a philosophy of life which glorifies the qualities of the body, the will and the mind by unifying them into a perfectly balanced entity. Uniting sport, culture and education, Olympism wishes to create a way of life based on contentment born of effort, on the educational value of setting the example and on the respect of universal ethical principles."

The Olympic Charter against Doping in Sport

The International Olympic Committee in February 1999 defined doping as "the administration or use of prohibited classes of drugs and of banned methods." ■

KOSOVO: BURNED BOOKS AND BLASTED SHRINES

Kosovo's cultural heritage was deliberately targetted during the 1998-1999 conflict says Harvard University's András Riedlmayer, co-author of the first survey assessing the damage

You spent three weeks in Kosovo in October 1999 documenting damage to cultural heritage. What were your main findings?

Kosovo's 600-year-old Islamic heritage suffered large-scale devastation during the "ethnic cleansing" operations. More than one third of the region's 600 mosques were destroyed or seriously damaged. A standard technique was to pack the base of the minaret with explosives so that the stone spire would collapse onto the building and smash the dome. We found racist anti-Albanian and anti-Islamic grafitti inside, Korans with pages ripped out and smeared with feces, and crosses carved into the mosques' *mihrabs* [prayer niche]. Valuable collections of Islamic manuscripts were burned. The 500-year-old mosque and historic centre of Vucitrn was set afire and completely bulldozed by Serb paramilitaries. Of Kosovo's four well-preserved Ottoman-era urban centres, only one, Prizren, escaped such devastation.

The other great loss are the *kullas* —stone mansions typical of Albanian residential architecture. They tended to belong to the more prominent Albanian families and had been in the same hands for 150-200 years. As such they were filled with artifacts and documents and were regarded as symbols of Albanian culture in Kosovo. Barely ten per cent of the region's 500 *kullas* survived the war. All this demonstrates that the damage was clearly not collateral. It was very intentional.

There have been allegations that the Serbian heritage also suffered damage.

As soon as the conflict broke out, Belgrade's Information Ministry and several conservation institutes claimed that NATO was deliberately targetting Serbian patrimonial sites. We visited each one of the sites for which damage was claimed and found these allegations to be unsubstantiated. At the end of the war, KFOR[1] troops were stationed to guard the most famous monasteries and churches.

© Xhavit Lokaj, in the archive of Kosovo Cultural Heritage Survey, Harvard University, Cambridge

The ruins of the *kulla* of Jashar Pasha, burned in May 1999 by Serbs.

However, many village churches became easy targets for revenge by returning Kosovar villagers. A majority of the attacked buildings were built in the 20th century, and quite a large number during the 1990s. These were seen as political monuments and were especially targetted. Since the end of the war, as far as we can tell, about 40 churches have been badly damaged and 40 vandalized to some extent. While most were modern, about a dozen were genuinely ancient structures.

Where do reconstruction efforts stand?

The buildings being restored are those that can be fixed quickly, which means concrete frame modern buildings. Unfortunately, the UN agencies in charge in Kosovo don't have much of a budget for reconstruction projects and the fate of cultural heritage has not ranked very high among the international community's concerns. Our Kosovo Cultural Heritage Project recently obtained funding for the reconstruction of three damaged historical monuments in Kosovo[2]. Another initiative enabled the Institute for the Protection of Monuments of Kosovo to clear the rubble, stabilize and cover with plastic sheeting close to 100 of the most endangered historic buildings. In the case of the mosques, Saudi-based Islamic aid agencies are bringing their own sectarian agenda to reconstruction, as it happened in Bosnia. They notably frown on all decorations and consider some practices common elsewhere in the Muslim world to be verging on the idolatrous.

Are the Albanians intent on rebuilding their heritage at this point?

There is a tremendous desire to rebuild their own heritage. People are immensely devoted to it and that's why it was targetted. But there is a lack of funding, and above all, a lack of expertise. Through our project, we hope to establish methodologies adapted to the local context and foster links between local and foreign professionals. ■

Interview by Cynthia Guttman,
UNESCO Courier journalist

András Riedlmayer, Aga Khan Program Bibliographer at Harvard's Fine Art Library, conducted the Kosovo Cultural Heritage Survey in October 1999 with colleague Andrew Herscher, an architect and architectural historian.

1. KFOR is a NATO-lead international force responsible for establishing a security presence in Kosovo under a UN mandate.
2. The restoration and training project will be carried out in association with a Boston-based NGO, Friends of Bosnia, and local authorities involved in cultural heritage in Kosovo.

CRIMES AGAINST CULTURE

Colin Kaiser

In the former Yugoslavia, the destruction of cultural heritage erased a common identity in cities and fulfilled an archaic dream in the countryside

In 1991, in the early days of the Cold War's end, Western Europeans were shaken by television images of a downpour of explosives falling upon the sleepy little Danube town of Vukovar, and plumes of smoke snaking their way over Dubrovnik, "the jewel of the Adriatic" and a World Heritage site. From 1991 to 1999, countries of the former Yugoslavia were subjected to war. While moderate commentators referred to a campaign of "ethnic cleansing," those targeted by the violence spoke of "genocide." It is precisely on this count and for crimes against humanity that generals and politicians are being prosecuted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Other terms emerged during these wars: "urbicide" to describe the bombing of cities such as Mostar and Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and "cultural cleansing" or "cultural genocide" to indicate the fate of mosques, churches, museums, archives, libraries, schools, and so on. Inevitably, these terms were part of a propaganda war, but all too often, they reflected the new landscapes of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and more recently, of Kosovo.

The deliberate destruction in wartime of cultural heritage is no historical novelty. Sometimes destruction has been an affair of pillaging for profit, at others it has been part of the widely recognized right to annihilate the enemy. During World War I, churches and old town centres were reduced to rubble out of military necessity. During World War II, large German urban centres disappeared as part of strategic "area bombing" by Commonwealth airforces.

But there are other reasons. The physical genocide of Europe's Jews by the Nazis was accompanied by a cultural genocide—the destruction of synagogues, cemeteries and other landmarks and treasures.

In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the heritage sites destroyed for purely military reasons were few and far between. History ▶

Cultural heritage expert, former director of the UNESCO office in Sarajevo

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A church destroyed in Croatia during fighting around Lipik.

reminds us that sacral buildings have been destroyed time and time again in the Balkans. The longstanding belief that the Ottoman armies, in the 15th century, were gentle with Christian heritage might well be a myth. Later, in the 19th century, the conquering Hapsburg armies and Catholic administrators in Croatia turned a handful of mosques into churches and destroyed the rest. More recently, during World War II, massive destruction of Serbian Orthodox churches was carried out in Croatia and parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the fascist Ustasha forces. Ruins in Eastern Slavonia and Krajina, prominently Serb areas of Croatia, stand as tangible reminders of this period.

But the more recent events are of a singularly different nature. We are not referring to foreign powers invading a territory and sweeping aside everything in their wake. We are in the presence of old societies which were to some extent integrated, but in the process of breaking up. The Serbian inhabitants of Croatian Krajina were not newcomers to the region in 1991. Croats, Muslims and Serbs have lived together in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the 16th century. And more recently, in the 20th century, mixed marriages in cities and towns played a significant role in weaving the social fabric. In the countryside, where people often settled by ethnic belonging, the situation was different. Accordingly, during the war, when Muslims, Croats, Serbs or Kosovar Albanians were chased out of their villages while their mosques and churches were mined or burned, it was the "other"—"the foreigner"—who was being removed from the region. The public dream of the nationalists (and sometimes the unavowed secret dream of the villagers) was thus fulfilled: to be finally at peace, alone among our own people. The mythical pure rural world was created.

In the cities and towns of Bosnia and Herzegovina, destruction had a different significance. It was common to hear in Sarajevo and Mostar that synagogues, Christian churches and mosques are only 100 metres from each other. This may not in fact be true, but in people's minds, it was. The cities enjoyed great religious foundations and were home to the finest Ottoman sacral heritage. A sense of integration had developed through a common attachment to places and shared spaces. The coexistence of religious traditions provided people with a common sense of ownership of sacral heritage. Serbs, Muslims and Croats also took equal pride in their secular buildings, such as the Sarajevo National and University Library.

"Ethnicized" heritage

All this was profoundly changed by war. Although we perceive destruction as barbaric, it is seen as an act of creation in the eyes of its perpetrators. In the countryside of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was the creation—or the liberation—of a mythical rural society, with the symbols of the unwanted other—his minarets or church steeples—eliminated from the horizon. But in the cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a common civic identity was destroyed, and along with it, the "other" inside the people. Secular and sacral heritage became ethnicized: before the war, nobody in Mostar would have said that the Old Bridge was a "Muslim" monument. Its destruction by Croat tanks turned it into one. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the impoverishment of the post-war cities is appalling, not simply because they are largely emptied of another ethnic group or of great sacral buildings. The surviving buildings, even intact, are simply ghosts from another age: the "other" has been eliminated at all levels, inside people and outside on the streets.

In this context, the restoration and rebuilding of cultural heritage can take on political and downright divisive dimensions: it is no longer a question of rebuilding what was held in common, but only "what was ours." The technical problems of reconstruction are infinitely less important than the "de-ethnicization" of heritage, and it is difficult to imagine how the Balkan societies will be able to overcome this problem. The only hope of restoring a once commonly held landscape lies in a commitment to do so by the ethnic or national group that carried out the crimes. ■

THE MOSTAR BRIDGE: REBIRTH OF AN EMBLEM

It took no more than 30 minutes for Stari Most ("The Old Bridge"), the emblematic symbol of Mostar's multicultural past, to be destroyed by bombardment from a Croatian army tank on November 9, 1993. Completed in 1566 after nine years of work, the bridge, designed by the Ottoman architect Mimar Hayruddin, once rose high above the emerald waters of the Neretva, connecting its east and west banks.

The 29-metre-long stone arch bridge, a World Heritage site, gave the town its name and stimulated its blossoming from a tiny medieval settlement to a thriving trading centre that attracted merchants and travellers from across the region. This is where local couples romanced and young men dove into the river below in a famed annual contest. At the outbreak of the war, inhabitants cushioned the bridge with car tyres in an attempt to protect the structure. It was first damaged in 1992 by Yugoslav Army shelling.

As soon as the bridge was destroyed, local architects and heritage experts who had fled the city started building a network to plan the reconstruction. In 1997, Hungarian military divers from the NATO-led peackeeeping force in Bosnia salvaged the bridge's stone blocks from the river bed and hoisted them from the water with technical assistance from the Hungarian bridge building company Hídépítö Rt. In 1998, UNESCO, the World Bank and the City of Mostar launched a project to rebuild the bridge. Due to extensive damage, less of the salvaged stonework will be reused than expected and stones will likely be extracted from a nearby quarry used by Stari Most's builders.

And Mostarians are already preparing to see their city's emblem resurrected. More precisely, the party begins on September 15, 2004 at 5 p.m., a date chosen in the midst of the war by Mostarian architects whose life work is now dedicated to rebuilding their town. ■

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CUDDLING UP TO CYBORG BABIES

Sherry Turkle

A "cybershrink" traces relations between children and their electronic pets and computer toys over three generations

Children have always used their toys and playthings to create models for understanding their world. Fifty years ago, the genius of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget showed it is the business of childhood to take objects and use how they "work" to construct theories of space, time, number, causality, life and mind. At that time, a child's world was full of things that could be understood in simple, mechanical ways. A bicycle could be understood in terms of its pedals and gears, a windup car in terms of its clockwork springs. Children were able to take electronic devices such as basic radios and (with some difficulty) bring them into this "mechanical" system of understanding.

Revisiting Merlin

But in the early 1980s, a first generation of computer toys changed the traditional story. When children removed the back of their computer toys to "see" how they worked, they found a chip, a battery, and some wires. Sensing that trying to understand these objects "physically" would lead to a dead end, children tried to use a "psychological" kind of understanding. They asked themselves if the games were conscious, if they had feelings and even if they knew how to "cheat." Earlier objects encouraged children to think in terms of a distinction between the world of psychology and the world of machines, but the computer did not. Its "opacity" encouraged children to see computational objects as psychological machines.

Among the first generation of computational objects was Merlin, which challenged children to games of tic-tac-toe. For children who had only played games with human opponents, reaction to this object was intense. For example, while Merlin followed an optimal strategy for winning tic-tac-toe most of the time, it was programmed to make a slip every once in a while. So when children discovered strategies that allowed them to win and then tried these strategies a second time, they usually would not work. The machine gave the impression of not being "dumb enough" to let down its defences twice. Robert, seven, ▶

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Virtual pets: nine-year-old Zhu Ying tries out a Tamagotchi in a Beijing store.

Professor in the Program in Science, Technology and Society at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and author of numerous articles and several books on people's relationships with technology, especially computers. Her most recent book is *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (Simon and Schuster, 1995 Touchstone paperback, 1997).

playing with his friends on the beach, watched his friend Craig perform the "winning trick," but when he tried it, Merlin did not slip up and the game ended in a draw.

Robert, confused and frustrated,threw Merlin into the sand and said,"Cheater. I hope your brains break." He was overheard by Craig and Greg, aged six and eight, who salvaged the by-now very sandy toy and took it upon themselves to set Robert straight. "Merlin doesn't know if it cheats," says Craig. "It doesn't know if you break it, Robert. It's not alive." Greg adds, "It's smart enough to make the right kinds of noises. But it doesn't really know if it loses. And when it cheats it don't even know it's cheating." Jenny, six,interrupts with disdain: "Greg, to cheat you have to know you are cheating.Knowing is part of cheating."

In the early 1980s such scenes were not unusual. Confronted with objects that spoke,strategized and "won," children were led to argue the moral and metaphysical status of machines on the basis of their psychologies: did the machines know what they were doing? Despite Jenny's objections that "knowing is part of cheating," children did come to see computational objects as exhibiting a kind of knowing. By doing so, they recast the Piagetian framework in which a definition of life centred around "moving of one's own accord."

Observing children in the world of the "traditional"—that is non-computional—objects, Piaget found that at first they considered everything that moved to be alive. Then only things that moved without an outside push or pull. Gradually, children refined the notion to mean "life motions," namely only those things that breathed and grew were taken to be alive.

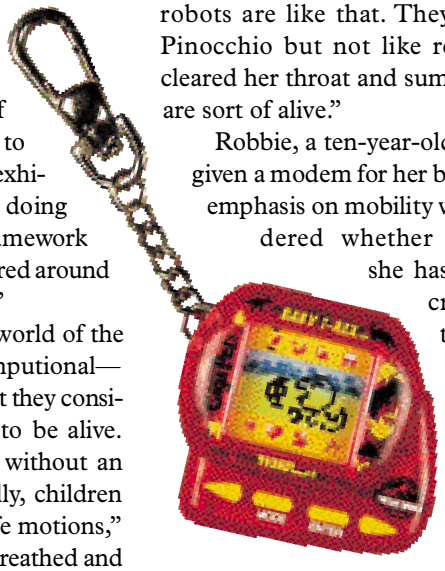
Motion gives way to emotion

Children broke with this orderly categorization by making distinctions about "machines that think." Their discussions about the computer's aliveness came to centre on what the children perceived as the computer's psychological rather than physical properties. To put it simply, motion gave way to emotion and physics gave way to psychology as criteria for aliveness.

In the 1980s, the computational objects that evoked "artificial life" (the "Sim"series, for example, assigns the task of creating a functioning ecosystem or city) strained that order to the breaking point. Children still tried to impose strategies and categories, but they did so in the manner of theoretical bricoleurs, or tinkerers, making do with whatever materials were at hand and with any theory that fit a prevailing circumstance. When children confronted these new objects and tried to construct a theory about what is alive, we were able to see them cycling through theories of "aliveness."

"Sort of alive" robots

An eleven-year-old named Holly watched a group of robots with "onboard" computational intelligence navigate a maze. As the robots used different strategies to reach their goal, Holly commented on their "personalities"and "cuteness." She finally came to speculate on the robots' "aliveness" and blurted out an unexpected formulation:"It's like Pinocchio [the story of a puppet brought to life]. First Pinocchio was just a puppet. He was not alive at all. Then he was an alive puppet.Then he was an alive boy. A real boy. But he was alive even before he was a real boy. So I think the robots are like that. They are alive like Pinocchio but not like real boys." She cleared her throat and summed up:"They are sort of alive."



Robbie, a ten-year-old who has been given a modem for her birthday, put the emphasis on mobility when she considered whether the creatures she has evolved while creating a virtual ecosystem through the game SimLife were alive."I think they are a little alive in the game, but you cannot save your game [when you turn it off], so that all the creatures you have evolved go away. But if they could figure out how to get rid of that part of the programme so that you would have to save the game and if your modem were on, then they [the creatures] could get out of your computer and go to America Online [an Internet Service Provider]."

The resurfacing of motion (Piaget's classical criterion for how a child decides whether a "traditional" object is alive) is now bound up with notions of a presumed psychology: children are most likely to assume that the creatures in Sim games have a desire to "get out" of the system and evolve in a wider computational world.

Through the 1990s, children still spoke easily about factors which encouraged them to see the "stuff" of computers as the same "stuff" of which life is made. I observed a group of seven-year-olds playing with a set of plastic transformer toys that can take the shape of armoured tanks, robots, or people.The transformers can also be put into intermediate states so that a "robot" arm can protrude from a human form or a human leg from a mechanical tank. Two of the children are playing with the toys, mixing human and machine parts. A third child insists that this is not right.The toys, he says, should not be placed in hybrid states. "You should play them as all tank or all people." An eight-year-old girl comforts the now upset third child. "It's okay to play them when they are in-between.It's all the same stuff," she said, "just yucky computer 'cy-dough-plasm.'"

This comment reflects a cyborg consciousness among today's children: a tendency to see computer systems as "sort of" alive, to fluidly cycle through various explanatory concepts, and to willingly transgress boundaries.

Feelings for Furby

Most recently, the transgressions have involved relationships with "virtual pets" and digital dolls (the first and most popular of these were Tamagotchis and Furbies) which raise new questions about the boundaries of what children consider as life. What these objects have that earlier computational objects did not is that they ask the child for nurturance.They ask the child to assess the object's "state of mind"in order to develop a successful relationship with the object. For example, in order to grow and be healthy, Tamagotchis (imaginary creatures "housed" in small screened devices) need to be fed, cleaned and amused. Going a step further, the furry electronic pets called Furbies simulate learning and loving.They are cuddly, they speak and play games with the child. Furbies add the dimensions of human-like conversation and tender companionship to the mix of what children can anticipate from computational objects. In my research on children and Furbies, I have found that when children play with these new objects they want to know their "state," not to get something "right," but to make the Furbies happy. Children want to understand Furby language, not to "win" in a game over the Furbies, but to have a feeling of mutual recognition.They do not ask how the objects "work," they take the affectively charged toys "at interface value."

In my previous research on children and computer toys,children described the life-like status of machines in terms of their cognitive capacities (the toys could "know"

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Rest in peace: Tamagotchis even have their own graveyards, the ultimate reflection of their quasi-human status.

things,"solve"puzzles). In my more recent studies, children describe the new toys, Furbies, as "sort of alive," which reflects their emotional attachments to the toys and their fantasies that the Furby might be emotionally attached to them. When asked whether the Furbies are alive, children tend not to speak about what the toy can do and focus instead on their feelings for the "pet" and how it might feel about them.

Emotional vulnerability

"Well, the Furby is alive for a Furby," says Ron, six. "And you know, something this smart should have arms. It might want to pick up something or hug me." Katherine, age five,asks: "Is it alive? Well, I love it. It's more alive than a Tamagotchi because it sleeps with me. It likes to sleep with me." Jen, age nine, focuses not on what the object offers her, but what she can do for it. "I really like to take care of it. So, I guess it is alive, but it doesn't need to really eat, so it is as alive as you can be if you don't eat. A Furby is like an owl. But it is more alive than an owl because it knows more and you can talk to it. But it needs batteries so it is not an animal. It's not like an animal kind of alive."

Today's children are learning to distinguish between an "animal kind of alive" and a "Furby kind of alive." The category of "sort of alive" becomes increasingly used. Perceived intelligence or "knowing" is another key distinction.

Over the past five decades, research in artificial intelligence has not even come close to creating a machine as intelligent as a person. But it has succeeded in contributing to a certain deflation of our language in terms of how we use the word intelligence. It is now commonplace to talk about intelligent machines when we really are talking about machines that play chess or assess mortgage applications. These feats are wondrous, but intelligence used to mean a great deal more than that. We now face the prospect of a similar deflation of language in talking about affect and emotion. Children talk about an "animal kind of alive" and a "Furby kind of alive." Will they also talk about a "people kind of love" and a "computer kind of love"?

These questions bring us to a different world from the old "AI [artificial intelligence] debates" of the 1960s to 1980s in which researchers argued about whether machines could be "really"intelligent. The old debate was essentialist. The new objects sidestep such arguments about what is inherent in them and play instead on what they evoke in us: when we are asked to care for an object, when this cared-for object thrives and offers us its attention and concern, we experience it as intelligent, but more important, we feel a connection to it. The old AI debates were about the technical abilities of machines. The new ones will be about the emotional vulnerabilities of people. ■

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH
http://www.unicef.org

Nearly everyone is familiar with the United Nations Children's Fund through its greeting cards. Yet the activities of this 1965 Nobel Peace Prize laureate go far beyond Christmas fund-raising. Its programmes on child health, nutrition, education and labour operate in 161 countries, a far cry from its original mandate in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe and China.

Today, the organization continues to provide relief and humanitarian assistance to every trouble spot in the world. Its website offers a wealth of information–teaching aids, games, photos, as well as full-text versions of many publications such as its annual report, *The State of the World's Children*. ■

TIM BERNERS-LEE: THE WEB'S BRAINCHILD

A staunch idealist, the British inventor of the World Wide Web is worth more than his weight in gold. Tim Berners-Lee has shunned opportunities in the private sector to captain an international consortium grouping the Web's who's who. His foremost goal: to keep on improving the Web for the common good.

© Elise Amendola/AP/Boomerang, Paris

How do you account for the Web's formidable growth in the last 10 years?

The Web initially spread because of existing Internet infrastructure set up during the 1970s. By the time I had the idea for the Web at the end of the 80s, computers in many universities and institutes in the United States and in Europe were already connected to each other by cables exchanging information. So you have to give credit to those pioneers who put together such a network before the Web's arrival.

The Web spread fast because it was decentralized and no one was controlling its growth. The fact that anybody can start a server or run a browser, without having to register with any central authority, is what allowed it to grow rapidly. There were enthusiasts all over the world who realized what the world could be with the Web and directed their efforts at developing it.

Also the Web's openness is a powerful attraction. Everyone can not only read what's on the Web but can also contribute to it. Everybody is in a sense equal. This sense of boundless opportunity also led to its remarkable growth.

Does the Web stand to benefit those traditionally on the margins of technological innovation?

It is obvious that the present imbalance in society is unhealthy for the whole world. But do not look to innovations alone for sol-

ving global issues. It is for people to make decisions on how to manage themselves and it requires a lot of effort on all sides to solve various problems. We've had many tools in the past and Internet can be another tool in addressing those challenges.

The basic idea of the Web is that it is an information space through which people can communicate, but communicate in a special way, by sharing their knowledge in a pool. The Web is more of a social creation than a technical one. It has not changed anything fundamentally in the way human beings think, read and communicate with each other. It has given people greater choice than ever before by simply providing information. Advantages of the Web range from enhanced collaboration between people in different countries to reading a newspaper sitting in a remote village.

Though the Web has given us many choices, we still don't know how to use those choices to our advantage. I hope the fact that each individual has more choice now will give us greater power to reformulate our society.

In your book *Weaving the Web*, you talk about the danger of the Web being controlled by a select group of companies or commercial deeds blocking its growth. What would the consequences be?

The danger is when large companies that sell computers and software effectively start to control what information you receive on the Internet. Companies which offer free computers or Web browsers could prevent a user from utilizing or accessing programmes of their commercial competitors. Even Internet Service Providers (ISPs) can have commercial deals with certain Web sites, making them easier to access than other sites. This is already starting to happen.

On the one hand, people feel it's reasonable for a company to influence your Internet access if they provide you with free computers and software programmes. But on the other, it's really important that the right of the individual to access unbiased information be upheld. The point is that one should not masquerade the other.

I'm not sure to what extent people realize or can measure whether their attempts to access different websites are being affected by commercial concerns. It's also very difficult to find a balance between the right of a company to offer a service which is subsidized and the right of somebody to have unbiased access. We have yet to find a good social arrangement

Another danger is that if a company establishes a monopoly, it will start making arbitrary changes to universally accepted Web standards. This would force competitors to concentrate their efforts on matching these rather than coming out with new, bright ideas to improve the product. This would affect the Web's overall development.

The Web has allowed a much greater flow of information which some countries are seeking to regulate and control. How do you react to this?

I know that some countries are contemplating or attempting to control information available to individuals on the Internet. My feeling is that it is very difficult to achieve because the Internet allows information to flow in many different ways. You are only a small hole in this vast system. In a way, controlling or regulating information is bad for the relationship between a government and the people and, in the long term, for the stability of the country.

There have also been calls for widespread censorship on the net. But in most of the Western world, censorship is a derogatory term for one body trying to control what information another body has access to. However, there is a growing recognition that parents have the right and the duty to protect their children from viewing undesirable sites. This led our Web Consortium to develop systems like the Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) that enables adults to control children's access to different websites.

The large number of filtering software tools on the market are more effective than government censorship. A nation's laws can restrict content only in that country but filters can block content no matter where it comes from on the Web. Fundamentally, it is for the people to determine the type of social mechanisms and regulations that will benefit society.

There have been rising concerns over surfers' privacy. How is this being tackled?

Privacy involves the ability of each ▶

CITIZEN TIM

In a field churning out dot.com millionaires every other week, Tim Berners-Lee stands in a league apart. The London-born and raised Berners-Lee could easily have become one of the world's wealthiest men by commercializing his invention. Instead, he chose to focus his efforts on improving and universalizing the Web.

A physics graduate from Oxford University, Berners-Lee started working for the Geneva-based CERN (European Particle Physics Laboratory) in 1980 where he wrote a programme called *Enquire* that could store and recall information based on random associations. That set the tone for the future development of the World Wide Web, which he invented in late 1990.

Berners-Lee wrote the HTML (HyperText Markup Language) establishing links with other documents in a computer and designed an addressing scheme that gave each web page a unique location, or URL (Universal Resource Locator). Then he developed a set of rules called HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) for transferring information across the Net. In 1991, he made the programmes freely available for Internet users across the globe. For the next two years, he continued working on improving the design of the Web with feedback from Internet users.

After leaving CERN in 1994, Berners-Lee headed for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Laboratory for Computer Sciences in Boston, where he is director of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The organization, which is comprised by more than 300 members from the global industry including giants like Microsoft and IBM, sets technical standards for the Web.

Hailed by *Time* magazine as one of the 100 greatest minds of the 20th century, the 45-year-old Berners-Lee remains a paragon of modesty despite the astonishing growth and success of his invention. Sitting in his office at the W3C, he asserts that the Web is just in its infancy. "The ultimate goal is to support and improve our web-like existence in the world," he says, explaining that the Web offers an unprecedented means to achieve greater freedom and social growth. "We are a still a long way from realizing its full potential." ■

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- **For more information:**
  ***Weaving the Web: The Past, Present and Future of the World Wide Web by its Inventor*, Tim Berners-Lee with Mark Fischetti, (Orion Business Books, 1999).**
- **Useful Web sites:**
  http://www.w3.org
  http://www.cern.ch/cern

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Surfing the Web in a Dakar slum is a rare luxury on the African continent, where only 3.5 inhabitants out of 1,000 have access to the Internet, compared with 14.1 in Asia, 88 in Europe, 160.3 in the Americas and 224.5 in Oceania, according to the International Telecommunications Union.

person to dictate what can and cannot be done with his or her own personal information. For consumers using the Internet, the greatest privacy concern is that after they've ordered a number of products, companies will have accumulated enough personal information to harm or take advantage of them. With consequences ranging from junk mail to the denial of health insurance, the problem is serious.

Users should be aware of how various websites use their personal information. In a way, privacy concerns are a leading impediment to the further growth of Web-based commerce, but I think sites should highlight the need for consumer privacy. With these concerns in mind, our Consortium has developed a new tool called P3P (Platform for Privacy Preferences Project). It would automatically communicate to users a website's stated privacy policy and compare it with the user's own pre-set policy preferences. If a Web site's privacy policy does not suit the user's interests, they can stop then and there.

A responsible website should have a privacy policy at the bottom of the home page. Failing that, I believe there ought to be a legally enforced default policy that offers individuals the highest protection. The issue of privacy has been addressed to a certain extent in Europe where companies have to keep secure the information they hold on customers, and are barred from combining databases in ways that are legal in the United States. Many people in the U.S. are starting to realize the need for more regulation of privacy and the need for greater protection of the individual and society.

There has been a spurt of Internet-related patents in recent years. What effect are these having on the Web's development?

The awarding of Internet-related patents poses a danger to the Web's universality and can kill good ideas. There was a widely held assumption in the Web's first five years that a common good was to be gained from putting together a far-reaching infrastructure. Now a huge amount of business is being done on the Web. The ability to control any part of it through patent claims will be very lucrative. In some cases businesses may be able to gain money simply by threatening to take legal action. This has a dampening effect on people working together to create a universal Web.

For example, people in the WWW profession meet often to discuss technological improvements and innovations, from improved graphic or video conferencing systems to ways of wiring the developing world. These projects have the potential to benefit many people but are sometimes suddenly abandoned because of fears or rumours of legal action from a company having patent claims to that technology. Currently, in the U.S. (unlike in many other countries), it is possible to patent part of the way a programme does something.

Some of the recent Internet-related patent awards have been derided by the Web community. They are effectively restricting the use of technologies that could expand the use and universality of the Internet. I hope that very soon patents will only be considered valid if they represent a real novelty or a really bright idea. I have yet to see a patent like this in the field.

There is no way to judge the authenticity or reliability of information on the Web, making users highly vulnerable. Is this likely to change?

We are not using all the technology available to verify the authenticity of a website or a person you come across. More advanced tools will soon be introduced. With the help of new browsers and by using digital signatures, you will soon be able to actually ensure that the document or the website you are referring to was in fact generated by its claimed author. With regard

to electronic messages, new and secure communication protocols allow us to make sure that nobody can sneak in and alter a message along its way.

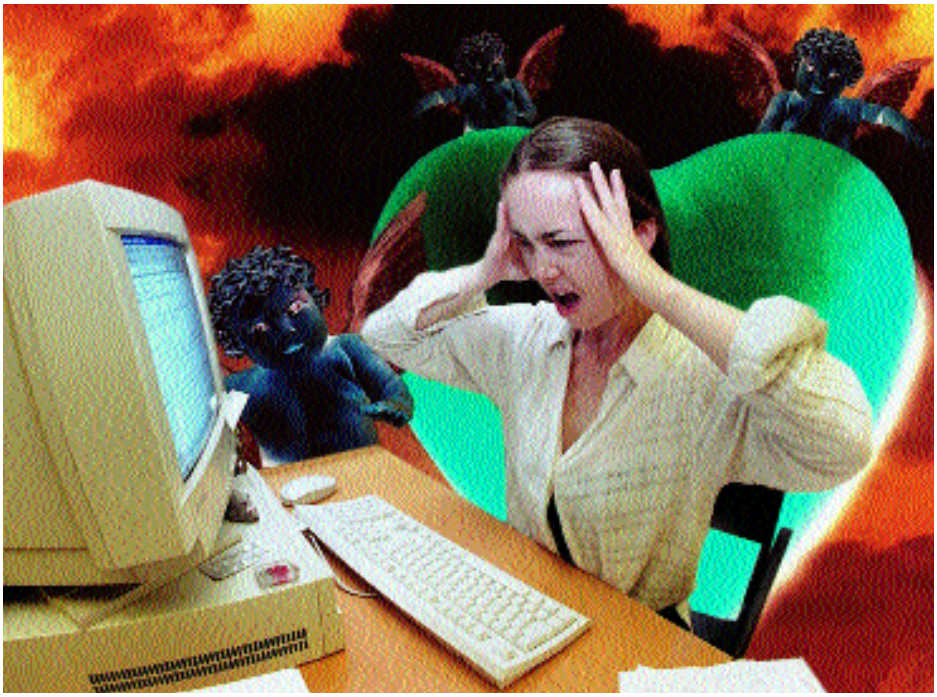
Now the question is how do you know whether a particular document or person you come across while surfing on the net is reliable. You just can't do that. There is no infrastructure set up at the moment by which you can actually check the reliability of a person or of a site you are visiting. Why should you believe in somebody about whom you have never heard of? I think people will have to learn whom they can trust on the Web.

Take a book for example. You read it because it was referred to you by reliable sources. In the same way somebody you know may point to a web site. Trust is always transferred from one individual to another. We have to set up a "Web of trust."

Some people initially thought of the Web as an anonymous space separated from reality in which there was no individual responsibility. This is not the case. Anyone who sends a fraudulent message is sitting somewhere and is naturally subjected to local laws. If someone makes forged transactions, the fact that they did it electronically doesn't in anyway absolve them of their responsibility under the law.

Thanks to the Web, the world has become a global village. But we have recently witnessed a rising incidence of hackers paralyzing public utility systems with viruses. Can systems become more resilient?

While the Internet is a decentralized system, I think the principle danger it faces now is the lack of diversity in the tools we use to access it. If you analyze the recent virus attacks, you'll find it's computers running the same software produced by the same company that are usually coming under attack by hackers. While it's advantageous to have many people running the same software, there is a need for alternative types of products in order to build up resistance to virus attacks.



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No, it wasn't a love message… Only greater product diversity will build up resistance to virus attacks, says Lee.

There have been proposals that Internet users in developed countries be taxed in order to wire the rest of the world?

I do think that the developed world owes a great debt to the developing one and Internet access adds one line to that debt. However, it is not obvious whether taxing all Internet users in general is a smart idea. It has to be done on a selective basis. I feel that those who can afford large amounts of Internet access—those for instance who are in position to get videos-on-demand or use the Web extensively for commercial purposes—can be taxed.

One could also argue that introducing a tax might discourage some countries from investing in the Internet, which is developing so rapidly right now. The only place where you could give serious thought to a tax is the U.S., and perhaps Finland. Other developed countries, which are trying to catch up with the U.S., may be a bit reluctant to ▶

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introduce taxation.

It is still difficult to get an Internet connection in the South because of the lack of telephone lines. Are there solutions to this?

Telecommunications departments in many developing countries are still bureaucratic and would never agree to sharing anything with anybody or to allow any competition that would improve access. One option is to rethink the technology altogether. We should start off by expanding the use of wireless technologies for basic communications in rural areas. Once networks have been built up, walkie-talkies could eventually be merged with the Internet without any input from telecommunication ministries. The system would be a decentralized one in which there would be no need to apply for an Internet address or a domain name. Research is already going on in this field and I strongly feel that commercial production of this technology should start soon to expand Internet access in Southern countries.

However, it may be difficult for this technology to be deployed in some countries because it would threaten the existing monopoly of telecommunication companies or government control over communications. The United Nations could play a role in spreading the idea among its member States as this technology offers very exciting possibilities.

I also think subsidies should be put towards translating information on the Internet into different languages. It is important that the Web support local cultures and not just broadcast American culture. Even in European countries, it was difficult for the Web to get started because you didn't have a huge monoculture or monolingual audience waiting everywhere. Getting over this barrier in countries with smaller linguistic audiences will be very difficult.

Could you elaborate on the "Semantic Web" you are working on at the moment?

My dream for the Web has two parts. In the first, I see the Web becoming a much more powerful means for collaboration among people. In the second, collaborations extend to computers. Machines become capable of analyzing all the data on the Web — the contents, links and transactions between people and computers.

The Semantic Web would be able to take information from different databases on the Web, from catalogues and weather sites to stock price information, and to allow this data to be processed by computers. At the moment, this cannot be done because the data available on the Web is not in a form that can be understood or converted by computers for direct analysis. This is because the Web pages are designed only for human readership.

The Semantic Web would also answer many people's prayers for a logical search engine that gives you solid results. Right now, search engines come up with thousands of Web pages in response to a request. It is impossible to search what's in all those pages. With the Semantic Web, the search engine would go out and say "Well,here is an object which I can mathematically prove to you matches the criteria requested." In short, search engines will become more meaningful and effective. Once the two-part dream is achieved, the Web will be a place where the whim of a human being and the reasoning of a machine will co-exist in an ideal, powerful mixture. ■

Interview by Ethirajan Anbarasan
Unesco Courier journalist

THE NET AND THE WEB

As Berners-Lee puts it, the Web could not exist without the Net. First developed for military purposes by the U.S. Department of Defence in the 1960s, the Internet is a network of networks. It refers to millions of computers around the world connected to each other by telephone wire, cable and satellite. The Web, a part of the Internet, is a worldwide collection of text and multimedia files linked to each other via a system of hypertext documents. The Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) was created by Berners-Lee in 1990 at CERN, the European Particle Physics Laboratory, as a means of sharing scientific data internationally, instantly and inexpensively. With hypertext, a word or phrase can contain a link to another text. To achieve this, Berners-Lee developed a programming language called HTML, which allows users to easily link to other pages or network services on the Web. ■

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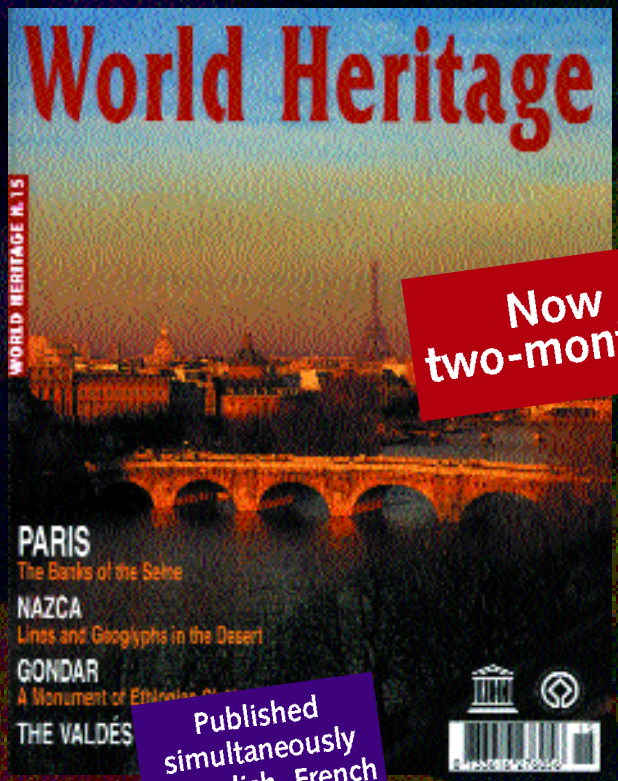

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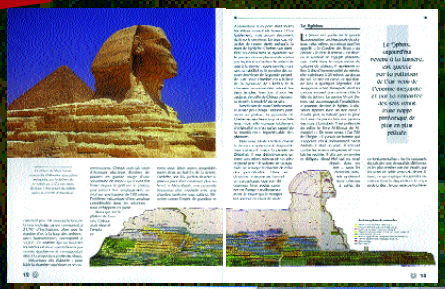

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